

THE CHURCH  
OF THE HOUSEHOLD

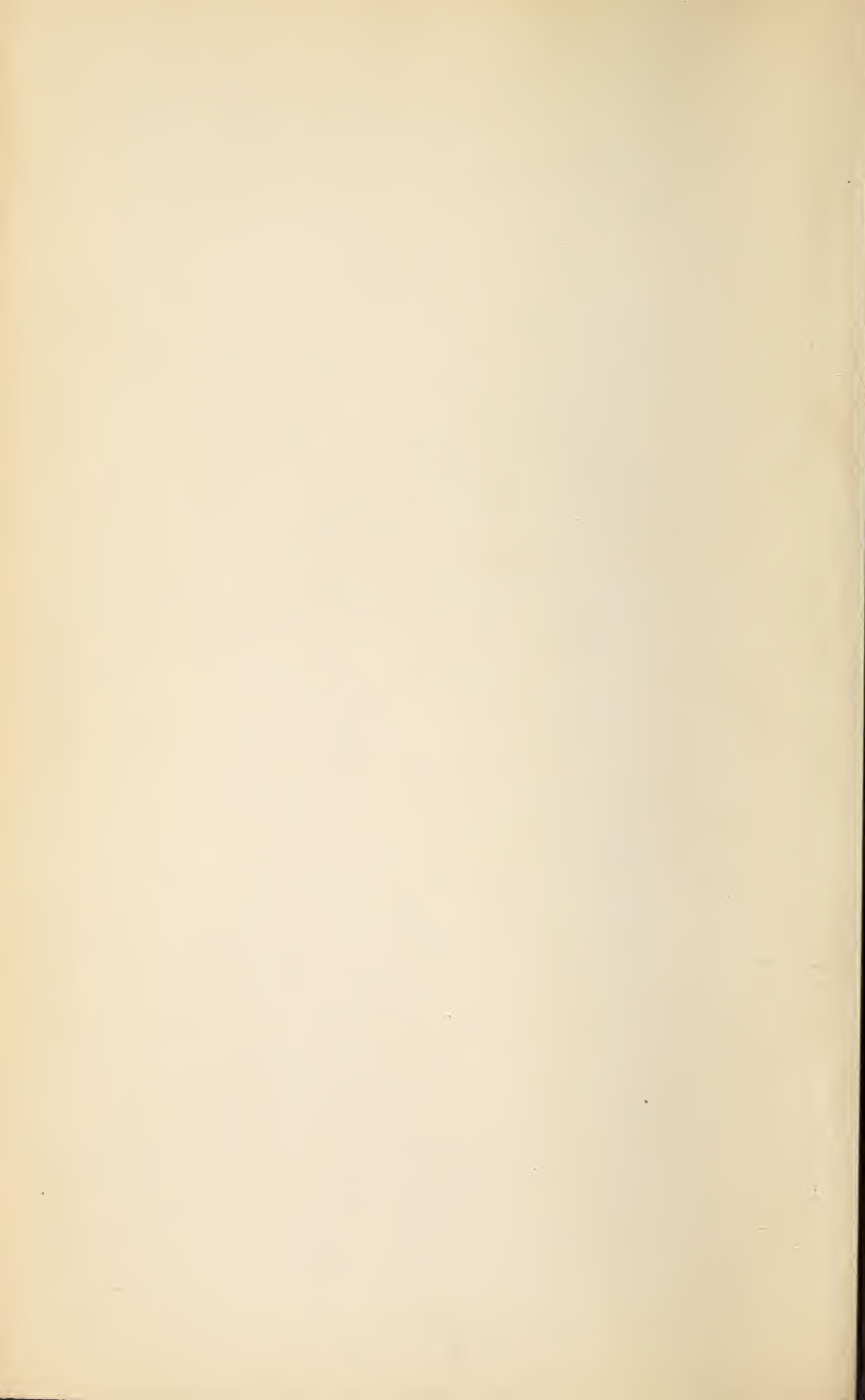
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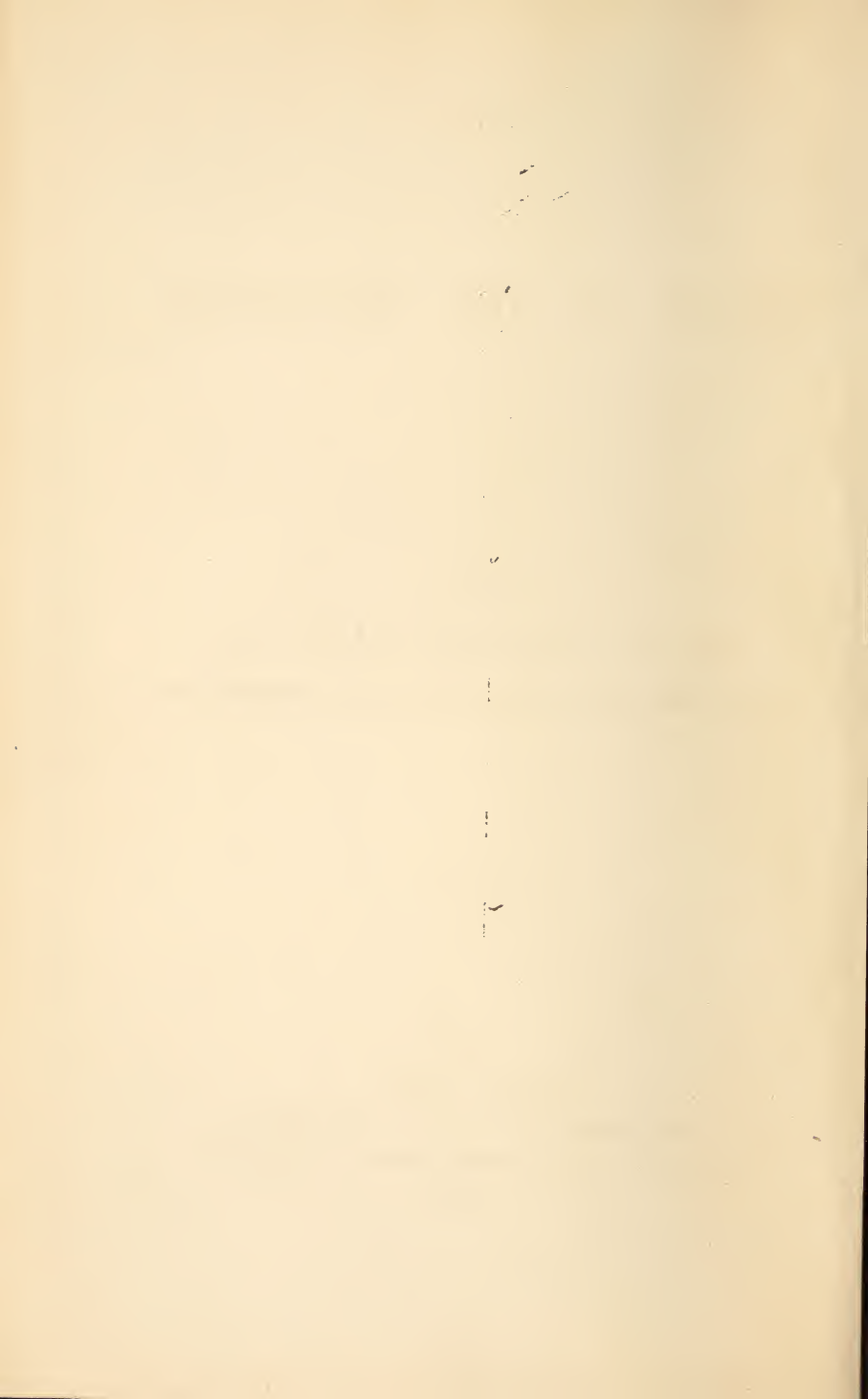
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THE  
CHURCH OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

BY

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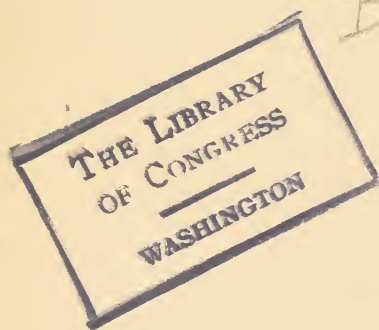
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## PREFACE.

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THE Church, in the dogmatic sense, is “a congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered.” This is the *visible* Church. It should be catholic—national—municipal ; able by the gentle forces of its own mere being to assert itself in the hearts of all men. And in the history of the world, banded by defences of external authority, it seemed at one time to realize the dream of early saints, and to sit the Queen of Nations. That vision has vanished from the face of the earth. Who, with his Bible alone in his hand, could determine whether it is ever again to be seen in this world ? Certainly it will not be in our time. Meanwhile the entire Christian world is agitated by the methods in which men would restore this visible unity. Externally it has degenerated into a ceaseless wrangling and struggle of sects, and divisions of the organic body.

This unity is twofold—that of a kingdom which is within—that of an organic, visible body, which is without. For the inner kingdom there is hope. Each man sees his own way to it. Each division of the common body

has its own interpretation of it. Of all others, the object of reverence with us—after the strong intention of the individual to seek the two virtues of piety and purity, is that which finds its round of graces and gifts in the family. It works from within outward. It begins with the heart and purifies the believer after the ideal of Christ in his relations to the members of his own home. It leaves him at his entrance on the street, a fully taught Christian, to show to other men and other families, the virtues and the manhood which he first learned within doors. The pool is formed by the rivulets which have been flowing from all the homes around. The parish church is the result of the truest and purest pieties which men have found within their households.

Two ideas are met with as to the use and importance of religion. One commands the popular vote—the idea, that by either priest or preacher alone, (and they differ rather as to the manner of the communication, than as to the fact of it), the divine grace comes to the individual. It is represented as something superadded to nature—something objective, something to be had in this, and in no other way. It must come by the hand of the sacramentalist or by the tongue of the exhorter—either as a compendious regeneration, or a stupendous and quasi-miraculous conversion. It is not enough to point to either of these parties, the duty of the lowest of the servants of God—the power by authority to stand as a sign-post, a divinely appointed one, if you will, but one that is useful to point out to a traveller the way—leaving the traveller to walk in it, by such power as God has given him ; but the sign-giver must be of the last necessity, to communicate that strength, to insure that walking, and to substitute his gifts of profession for the only thing which at last endures

and avails—character. Religion is a superadded somewhat. It is an *opus operatum*, whether from priest or preacher. The world has grown above the one scheme. It is fast outgrowing the other.

The other and truer thought looks to the kingdom of God as always in its permanent forces within—something which enters into man as light into a dark room, removing the blackness and gloom, scattering the birds of evil omen, and the vile, insect, passion-idols, bringing in a truer life and a better hope—something, if superadded, yet absorbed and made identical with the recipient. In such a thought of religion all outer means are of avail only as they kindle the ray-power in the soul ; as they, by a second birth as against evil, give the soul its power over itself, and develope the real manhood of the Christian.

These varying notions of the Christian system run into three channels. One, of God's work as only within, so as to deny any use of the means of grace. This is the Quakerism of widely different sects—the indifferentist on the one side, and the evangelical school on the other. Character is absorbed by the latter in *election*. The man is hidden under the robe of imputed righteousness.

The second school look to a charmed circle of Church rites, now, lowly bowing to the usages of an ignorance which has had its day and done its work ; anon desiring the glittering bubble of some metaphysical ideal, as superstitious and more ephemeral than the other. All the way down to the backslider and the modern half-believer, character loses itself in the forms of profession.

The third—and in the service of it, we offer the following Discourses—accepts the ordinances as in their way necessary to an end in the change of the man—and *necessary no longer*. It holds that the one Sacrament which

underlies all Missions, which requires the actual hand of another man to baptize all creatures, and saves Christianity from degenerating into a mere philosophy, is passed by and forgotten\* in the very sealing of a contingent covenant between the creature and his God. So the Church utters the sound warning before the recipient turns from the font : “Remember *always* that baptism represents unto us our *profession*, which is to follow Christ—be made like unto Him, to die to sin, and rise again unto righteousness.” The other Sacrament, which brings all men to an equality and destroys all human castes, whether of religion or race, forms the golden clue to the history of our present civilization. The priest is in this view like the High Priest of our profession, armed with power to bless, only, as like his Master he becomes the least of all and the servant of all. The Church is a divinely constituted means to the end of a sanctified manhood. Salvation is now found in being saved from that which de-humanizes man. The conscience, as it is developed under the daily life in the relations of the family, by the power of an endless life, shown by the Son of Man, is supreme. God is in us to will and to do—and the man willing and doing, is anointed with an unction from above. The household is the first Church, on whose vigor and purity all sodalities and voluntary societies depend ; and by reflection from it, are more or less true to the idea of Christ.

How far we may have been faithful to this idea, the reader will judge for himself. We have not aimed so much at developing a system—as in defining the family ties and relations, under this leading idea. It may be easy to find faults and flaws. It may be as easy to accept

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\* “Forgetting those things that are behind.”—*St. Paul.*

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the hints which are cast out, as leading one to a sounder view of the life we are living. God was once manifest in the flesh, as Jesus revealed to others the Divine in His own soul. He may be manifest in the family life now, as purifying the hearts of many men and leading them to a deeper unity of character, than sacramentarian or preacher can offer. Unity was once in Christ as light is in the full-orbed moon. It shines for us now over the troubled waters in a line of light crinkling and flashing on multitudinous surfaces of little waves, little churchlets and sects, all the way back through the darkness of earth to its primal source. May such light and such proofs of unity abound in many homes, and commend and ratify the CHURCH OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

May the Spirit of holiness so mingle in the homes of those who listened patiently to these discourses, and of all others who give them a kindly thought, that it may reveal Christ in them, and fit their occupants, by imitation of Him, to meet His and our Father in peace.

“ The outward form is not the whole,  
But every part is moulded  
To image forth an inward soul,  
That dimly is unfolded.”





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# The Church of the Household.

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## I.

### HOME, THE FIRST COVENANT.

*"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*—HEBREWS xi. 10.



BRAHAM was a representative man. In nothing was he more so, in my opinion, than in this fact, which is here recorded: in his always *seeking for a home*. I propose his example to you at this time, *as thus seeking* that which, for wise ends, in the great lesson of God's revelation, he never found on earth. He never found it. He ran the two things of heaven and home into one, by the very fact of his disappointment.

I. Let us catch the meaning of this writer, in the text. He knew his meaning well. He has in mind, as I read his words, some of the profoundest truths

of life. He says, "*By faith.*" Just for the once, think of this faith of his as you think of that boy of yours who has gone out to California, to seek his fortune. He has gone in some sort of faith, I take it. As he grows homesick for all the softening influences which he has left behind him, he has some sort of belief that upholds him in his loneliness. Say, it is nothing more than to make money to come home again. He thinks of somebody that stands behind the money, to make it worth the sacrifice of his best days in a far-off land, among strangers. Ah! these hearts of ours are not cut out in cardboard patterns that you can draw ink-lines across them, and keep all the agitations of any one passion in one particular spot, away from all the rest. He will make money, but he carries with him whither he goes, the passions and hopes of his life here. Soft dreams of a nobler future, that may be his reward, will stir him in the loneliest ranch, in the wildest sierra; and he will claim that he is digging the hot earth for some treasures that are more precious to him than ingots of gold and silver. Now mark, I am not saying that Abraham had any of these ordinary, carnal notions. The dry polemicists have settled it, that it is too undignified for any one to have so much of the milk of ordinary human nature about him, if his name occurs in the Bible. We will leave him to himself, as having only great thoughts of the Nicene creed and the Saybrook platform: discussing, as he went, only the doctrines of imputed right-

eousness and the like. I asked you to accept our own boy, from whom we parted, with a heart-break, as having a faith of his own, on quite a lower plane, it is true, but still something like his.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” I seem to feel like being heretical to the orthodox belief, in which I was brought up, and to think that the writer is somehow thinking of the day when he once felt his own heart swelling in his bosom, as he saw the blue mountains of the Taurus range sinking out of his sight, and turned to hide the tear that would rise, as he looked forward toward the Syrian shores; with a heavy heart. True he was not going quite ignorant of “the whither he was bound;” but he, as every man almost in the world, was seeking his fortune. He knew he was to meet his father’s friend, the great Gamaliel, and to sit at his feet. He was turning his face towards the sacred home of his race, and the temple of his God. But he never would have written these words if he had not known what it was to have that heart-sink at going he knew not whither. It is, I think, a beautiful thought that he has caught in the brief record of the life of the man Abraham. It throws the shadow of his grand life far down the centuries. It seizes the faith on its side of nature. We all hear that same call that God made to him. We too have God about us. Mean though our lives may seem,

God is in them. We thought of anything else than of using the example of the patriarch for our common purposes, when we made our start. But, it is the glory of this book, that it finds us out at every turn. Just as in nature, God here is always better than we think Him; always doing us good. So—and would that we might realize it always—so here, the very foundation stone of a true faith was placed, in the history of a man doing just what we all have done or have to do in our turn; to lift a loving mother's arms from our neck and hear the last counsels of a wise father, to leave the resting-places of childhood, and listen to the voice that calls to all the manhood that is in us, and go forth to seek a city that hath foundations.\* He proceeds: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." I like the change of the word, that occurs in this passage. In the book of Genesis, it is always 'a land,' that is promised to Abraham. God always speaks to him of 'a land that I will shew thee.' The nearest approach to a city, is the old-time habit of pious men, that when he thinks he has reached it, he builds an altar,

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\* "The family bond, though a conquest won by culture over the rudimentary state of man, and slowly, precariously acquired, has yet become a sure, solid, and sacred part of the constitution of human nature."—*Matthew Arnold, God and the Bible*, pp. 145-155.



and offers a sacrifice to Jehovah.\* He and his children were always 'heirs of a promise:' and none the less always wanderers from place to place: always seeking and never finding a home. As in childhood, we fancy a chase of the ever retreating rainbow, to find the fairy's bag of gold which lies at its foot; so they are seen always pursuing a vision, which is never quite attained, on the earth. It is on this disappointment, this "aching void" that this same writer builds an argument for the necessity of a fulfilment of the divine promise, *somewhere*. As it was not fulfilled here, then where was it? Faith in a good God said promptly, in an immortal life. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,† and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, by their actions declare plainly, that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called

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\* On reaching Sichem, in consequence of a vision confirming him in possession of the land, he built the first altar (*Gen.* xii. 6). Again another, between Bethel and Hai, (v. 8,) and a third at Hebron, (xiii. 18,) near which most of his life was passed.

† *Hebrews* xi. 13-16. *Embraced them.* ἀπαλάμμενοι. The word is emphatic. *Salutantes* (*Vulgate*). Wordsworth explains it by *jac-tare oscula* (*Tacitus*), or *basia* (*Juvenal*), to throw kisses towards one. It signifies the strongest natural yearning.



their God: for He hath prepared them a city." What to them looking forward to the future, seemed to be a country, or *patria*, *i. e.*, a father-land; to the Apostle, living so long after, was plainly a city, and as the event showed, the eternal city of the saints, whose builder and maker is God. It is to my mind a noble thought, which is contained in this passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews; that the first great faith, that was destined to be the very protoplasm of all the future revelation, to lift men to the heights of religion, should be established by the providence of God, *in the love of home*.<sup>\*</sup> All sects and scholars claim Abraham as the father of the faithful. I point you to this peculiarity of his faith. It was the faith in a home, that was to be his by promise. If the promise was never to be realized in this life, if he was to have here no continuing city, it is perhaps none the less a striking similitude to our own truest hopes. They are all the better for us, when they are gained, if they are found to have been too bright to be realities here. The passion which springs up in a true heart for a home 'eternal in the heavens,' where there are no sorrowful defects, no sickness nor partings to wring the soul, may be the richest gift of divine grace to those who have been most faithful

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\* "He (Abraham) is not an ecclesiastic, not an ascetic, not even a learned sage, but a chief, a shepherd, a warrior; full of all the affections and interests of a family, and household, and wealth, and power; and for this very reason the first true type of the religious man, the first representative of the whole Church of God."—Dean Stanley, *Hist. Jewish Church*, Sect. 1, p. 23.

and most successful in their daily duties here. The best home may make us 'home-sick' for a better life.

I enjoy sometimes the thought, that in music, for instance, it is better to have the taste so cultivated, that no performance here can ever again satisfy it; that the best that can be done for us, is to have it suggest for us the unending, because the exhaustless, song of Moses and the Lamb, in which the refined ear of the perfect saint shall hear every line of individual rejoicing and praise, as if sung in solo, and also have with it the swell of the full anthem, in which the roll of the planets shall be the undertone, and the innumerable hosts of exulting saints the tireless chorus. Is it not so? Is not the strongest testimony to our immortality, to be recognized in this power to feel 'a void, the earth can never fill?'

We are all able to feel the truth of the text: "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In other words, he was always seeking to realize the common dream of us all alike, a home. Year after year, the man grew older in the search of it. The days of his early vigor passed away, and it was not realized. He remonstrated with God, and said to him, in almost a bitter cry of his heart: "This Eleazar of Damascus is my heir." Then Isaac was given to him. "Ah!" he says, "the vision is now come true." But God again came to him and tried him terribly. As the angel caught his hand, the aged servant of God

saw the meaning of his whole life, saw the end of all true faith, saw the day of Christ and was glad.\* As the dreams of a home here on earth at last passed from before his eyes, the golden walls of the New Jerusalem rose on his sight. He thus becomes the example of all who have 'the like faith with Father Abraham.'

II. What then is this vision? what is home, to a true man?

Two sets of ideas call themselves our religion: one, the notion that all daily and common things are too mean and vulgar to be considered in thinking of God. It is the rough distinction of *religious* and *secular*. The other, that religion is in all mean and common things, as well as in the highest; that faith is not having dreams of pure intellect in certain historical channels, so much as in having a faith, which lets nothing be common or profane. One sort is like Peter, too pious to eat in his hunger, the objects placed before him, 'abundantly to enjoy,' but remonstrating with the Almighty: "I have never eaten anything common or unclean." The petulant creature is for the time more pious than the Creator. The other sort of religion is in sympathy with the voice that said to the scrupulous Jew, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." One set of thoughts puts a man's

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\* "The union of parental love with the total denial of self, is held up in both cases (Christ's death and the offering of Isaac) as the highest model of human, and therefore as the shadow of Divine Love. 'Sacrifice,' is rejected, but 'to do Thy will, O God,' is accepted."—*Dean Stanley, Hist. of Jewish Church, Sect. xi. p. 56.*

religion in something outside of his daily work. The other finds in his home the sacred altar, at which the real sacrifices of life are always being offered ; where the real growth in grace is to be sought.

Home is the resting-place of the heart. It lies so exactly in the lines of all religious thought, that a man is bound to make it more or less one with his religion. The ancients had their household gods. We Christians talk of the domestic altar. There are certain convictions, which make Home the first of all temples to us. It is the original of the idea of a Church. God's people are his household.\*

The parish is the collection of all the families of a place. They are banded in one covenant, for certain purposes, and they meet for worship at certain times. But *all* the time and for *all* purposes they are in the covenant of Home. As the rills of the mountain steal out of every grassy nook, from every little dell and ravine in the side of it, and at last appear as a river in the valley, so the greatest nations and the purest churches are the sum of all the home-life of the people. The river may be clear as the Saco, or discolored as the sluggish Santee—it is always what the inland influences have made it. The Church is what the home-life of the individuals, in their families, will make it. Of course there may be exceptional features in it. There may be homes, in which every thing is out of place and discordant ; the father's influence invaded by some stranger ; the mother's gen-

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\* πατριὰ, Eph. iii. 15. οἰκεῖοι, Eph. ii. 19. Gal. vi. 10.



tle word of no power; the rights of the elder children, kept in constant jeopardy and dispute; and all done, under a plea of religion.

Indeed, may I not suggest the fear that it is too much the case in the majority of our homes. Is it not true that we seldom think of home as the true place for the education of the conscience? But I repeat the remark, that as the homes are, in the main, such will be the Church. This community is in some things priest-ridden. Not in the old fashions nor by those calling themselves priests. But the want of the old arts does not remove the evil. So long as the main religion of a community is held to be any one act, or set of acts, in which the family can take no part, so long as the deep convictions of the soul by which it draws near to God, and in consequence of which it begins to live, are matters of ecclesiastical influence, independent of the voices of the family life, just so long, will it be true that we are, in a mild sense, priest-ridden. Your child of fifteen or twenty years of age goes out of a morning, according to this scheme of doctrine, a woe-inheriting sinner. He or she comes in at night, a soul at peace with God; converted, a "professor of religion," washed in the fountain of redemption and forever saved. Now what have you to do with such change? What has the family? Nothing at all. You have been loving the child with all a father's love, or a mother's watchful tenderness—you have been educating it, as you supposed, with some sort of a scriptural promise, that if you brought it up

in the way it should go, it would never leave it. But you find that such thoughts are all the "filthy rags of self-righteousness." Your child's whole education, in the most important part of it, in the hope of acceptance with God, from which all moral conduct flows, has been taken out of your hands, and given into the hand of its religious teacher. It has 'joined the church,' not as a consequence of its regular life from infancy; not as a consequence of its moral education, as you have been leading it, but in spite of it. There is this immense break in our lives. Yea! and men love to have it so.\*

Now, I ask it in sober sadness, is this necessary? Is it the will of God? Is it the faith of father Abraham, and of every other Bible-saint? I think not. There is no power in the Church to come between the father and the child, that can in any way impair the unity of the education of the family. The first covenant is the home covenant. The first church that a man joins is the home church. He is born into a family, whose high-priest is consecrated, by a rite as holy as ever fell on human head. The approval of high heaven was given to Abraham; because "he would command his children after him." God, who loved him, left him under the tutelage of his own parents, until he had become a full-grown man. Then again he did not call him finally, until his father had died. But it is hardly necessary to multi-

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\* I am a believer in the fact of conversion, as given in Scripture, as the *exception*, and in the Catechism, as the *rule*.



ply instances out of the Bible. It is written, in my way of reading it, on another scheme of life from ours. In the Bible, as in nature, home is the first church of the infant; the passage from it to any other, is by rule natural and easy.

III. Let me show my meaning from the Prayer-book. We bring a child to the font to be baptized. There we confess, that it is 'by nature born in sin, and a child of wrath.' Pass, just now, what we mean by this language; it surely allows the need of some compensating blessing, to be sought in this way. Now a common sense of justice tells us, that if God, by any means, has held the infant responsible for the condition in which it is born; he surely, if he has any confidence in a mother's love, to say nothing now of a father's, he surely will allow some way to set off against its condition by nature, some covenant state that may save our precious theology. Otherwise this happens. You are members of a church, into which you cannot bring your young children. You are in the fold. They are in the world. You are saved by a grace that has no room for them. And, to pass by all the rest, I emphasize this thought. You cut across all the natural powers of love in the family. How can you talk to your child of the duties of life? It is in 'the gall of bitterness.' If there is a break as wide as this between you, your hands cannot repair it; your tiny arms can never reach across its gloomy depths. What is a home where the father is obliged to pray always for the

*future* religious change of those he loves best?—where, in all the family life, at the morning prayers, at the daily question of duty, at the evening hour of separation, or in the dark days of sickness, there is always this fearful under-consciousness such a one has of a wily inherited disease in the blood. It is an awful gulf, between the members of the same household! They may not often speak of it; but it is never forgotten. How can it be? They live on the edge of a precipice, where the cliffs go down sheer ten thousand feet, and the rocks below are “heaped with the damn’d like pebbles.” Of all the home-band the little infants seem the most in peril: and reverend scribes stand ever by, to see that no weak mother, like that one of old Greece, shall bare her white bosom and recall her child from the dangerous edge, by the un-orthodox instincts of nature. This scheme has been tested in this community lately. Now for awhile true religion has to fear the reaction. Every one of us has a personal interest in it. And in the interest of the truth, I recall you to the picture of the faith of the first of the leaders of the religious thought of the world. The older covenants held all the children in their sacred circle. That religion is the safest that begins with honoring home. The eloquent tongue of the appointed preacher in the church can open to us the knowledge of sacred things. It can never take the place of the father’s authority. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,” says Solomon; and it begins in the *instruc-*

*tion of the father, and in the law of the mother.* The priest may offer for us, in the larger assembly of the gathered community, the sacrifices of prayer and praise. In the private household, every man is the priest of his own family, and has no vicar. The altar of the house is as sacred as any altar on the earth. The prayer offered there rises with acceptance into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. The daily conversion that goes on there in the little jars and battles for right and duty is that which makes the man.

I close, with this one thought ; that it is worth every man's while to examine the foundation of his home-life. If I am not far out of the way, there is need of a greater regard for the sanctities of home. Honor father and mother, was the first commandment with promise. The *promise* is good yet. It adorns many a man with the jewels of graces, which, like amulets, keep off many a plague, unknown to him. But if father and mother and all the children, by mutual consent, attempt to transfer this honor to some other agency, call something else, their religion, and look for the grace of God *exclusively*, in some other place, I care not if it be fifty times a church, there is a wrong done to nature and to religion, that is not to be hidden.

Religion began, yea, I believe it always begins in seeking that better city, whose image here is in the true home. Take, for example, a good boy, one who in the phrase of some, is a prodigy of early piety ;

who in my opinion is a *good boy*, and Jesus loved boys, as *boys*, and said some emphatic things about them. In his innocence his home lies very near to heaven. If I try to tell him what the Church is, and keep to the Bible for my illustration, and forget the Thirty-nine Articles, for the time; lo, the Church is *his mother*. He knows well enough what that means. He some how feels able to join a Church like that. He can subscribe to its creed, every letter; nor find a difficult mystery in it all. If I go on to tell him of the awful Being, who inhabiteth eternity, I can go to Sinai, to tell him of the reign of law. I can show him nature gathering there, to warn the sinner, of the fruits of all evil conduct; I can make the darkness grow heavy to him, as he hides his head, at night, in the crib, with the thunders that rolled over the guilty cities of the plain; *but* if I try to tell him of the good Being, into whose hands I myself hope to fall at last, the words of terror one by one pass away for the loving promises of the Son of Man. *God is his Father*. Every thought that he has a right to have of his father, he has a right to transfer to his Maker. Chiefly this one: if he trembles at the mystery of the divine nature, as tremble we all will at times, it is the image of his own father that comes into the mind. If you would tell him of heaven, in Scripture idiom; it is his home. That is the most sacred thing that he knows. It is the little pool of purest water, hid, it may be, in some nook, away from common sight; but it is *his* home. There



the light of truths that never are felt but once, came to him. And as he looks into its pellucid depths, it has a purity of its own, and then it reflects heaven to him, as his eternal home, as nothing else can. You can teach those who are in your church at home, in this catechism, and no one else can do it. Should we not believe, then, in our homes? Should we not guard them from the unwise zeal of mistaken teachers? Of all the fine arts, brethren, is there one that at all compares with this, of home architecture? Is there any picture that you can hang on your walls, like these visions of the "land of far distances," which men call heaven? Is there anything worth living for, to compare with the old-time search of the inexperienced Patriarch, as he went out from his native land, not knowing whither he went? He began by seeking a country, which he never found here. He reached at last "a city with foundations," of God's building. And strangely was it built. It was the Home that he had all along been seeking. It was the Home that he had all along been making for himself. Like the nautilus, we are building our homes out of the heart's life of every day. The revelation of a larger world will show, that in another scene, we open into larger chambers, but every whorl of the mystic whole, has continuous and symmetrical convolutions around the common axis; that in a deeper sense than appears on the surface, home and heaven are one.



The tissue of the life to be  
We weave with colors all our own,  
And in the field of destiny  
We reap as we have sown.  
Still shall the soul around it call  
The shadows which it gathered here,  
And painted on the eternal wall  
The past shall reappear.

## II.

### HOME, UNDER THE OLD COVENANT.

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*Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain, that build it.*

PSALM CXXVII. I.



THE word *house* has a peculiar use in the Old Testament. It means the family, rather than the abode. We see this use in the second table of the decalogue. The tenth commandment, bids us not to covet a neighbor's *house*, before it speaks of his wife. At the time that it was given, the children of Israel had no houses. They were wanderers in tents, living as their ancestors Abraham and Isaac had done, and like them too, seeking a better country. The house was *the family*, especially the children. Many circumstances made the coveting of this sort, a sin easily besetting that people. The home, in the sense of the household, was the object of intense desire with them. I believe it is not too much to say, that they accepted the burden of the Mosaic law, as the regulator of the passion for

home. The same use of the word is seen in the psalm: "Except the Lord build the house," means that the blessing of God is necessary to the comfort and continuance of a family. The co-builders are the parents: the materials are the living souls of children and servants.

It may seem to some an easy thing to dispense with the idea of the Lord's care in the establishment and defence of a family. Just here is the point of difference between a true religion and a false. The foundation-stone of the house is *faith*. It is not an arbitrary faith; but that one faith, which is the *reflex of the law of nature*. To illustrate this, in a word: a parent, who educates a child now in any sort of faith which claims to be religious, sometimes wonders that the promise is not fulfilled, for him—that the child, when old, shall not depart from it. But he has never taken the trouble to examine whether the thing that he calls by so august a name, is the faith of nature, or was ever recommended to him by the God of nature. He took up his religion at hap-hazard. It was perhaps a new thing with him; it offered him some doubtful advantages. He rushed at it. He fenced him in with prejudices. He closed the windows and shut out the light of conviction as to anything beside. He indulged in very doubtful expedients to keep his sectarian isolation and maintain his infallibility intact. Now religion, as a practical thing, must *be one and the same* under all forms, in its last essence. If a man bring up his children in the natu-

ral religion of good hygiene, as to their bodies, it is certain that the rule is, that when old they will thank him for it.

The same is true of the moral nature. There is as much law in the one case as there is in the other. I do not say that there are the same laws, but the same amount of law.

To manifest this, I offer to you some of the facts of the Old Testament, about the homes under the law of Moses. You will find on examination, that one of the purposes of that economy was to reveal the laws of home ; to tell men, who were in a condition of ignorance, what it was to be ; how it was to be guarded ; and the intimate connection that exists always between it and the temple.

Religion has *two chief objects*. I. The right worship of God. II. The right education of men. I am dealing now with only one of these objects ; the education of men. I mean their moral, and not their intellectual education. It will appear that the two objects of the law were always over-lapping, one on the other. They were like the two tables of stone. Both were guarded in the same mercy-seat, in the holiest recess of the temple. God dwelt in the temple, just over the two, to keep watch and ward over both alike.

I. The first fact, to which I call your attention, is this: the corner-stone of the home of a true Israelite was placed in his religion. Take the ordinary working of all common life. Two persons have married

and set up their house. They begin a home, for themselves. Now, the one curse of all the savage races of the world, in that age, was polygamy. It is the one original sin of nature. It was "the rock" out of which they were hewn; "the hole of the pit out of which they were digged." It degraded all people then. It had made Egypt the abode of vices and demons, yea, and of diseases unnumbered; and drags its slime over that unhappy continent of Africa to this late day. In polygamous countries, there is no such thing as a home, save by exception. The degradation of woman, is the prime necessity of the system. The Israelites certainly had no knowledge of any better system. They were to be educated into one. Their low state of morals compelled Moses to wink at certain abuses in their conduct. They certainly started at the lowest point. Their first models were failures here. Now see how they were educated by their laws, into better thoughts.

In the first place the crime of adultery, and especially that of the married woman, as it always should be, was made detestable, by all manner of punishments, human and divine. If she was found guilty of it the penalty was death. Her neighbors joined to inflict it. If she perjured herself to conceal her sin, the poor wretch was forced to accept her condemnation, in a manner too horrible to be described here. Now notice, please, that I am only looking to one point; *how the race was to be educated,*



in the first principles of a home. The *sine qua non* of such a thing is the chastity of woman. Without that, there is no such thing possible. You may patter about the equality of the sexes. It will not remove one iota of the fact; that the jewel of every home, the palladium, whose presence guards it from destruction is the purity of the wife. That of the husband is another matter. It has its own reward and penalty. But nature, law and history have one common testimony in this matter.

So much for this side of the educational system of Moses. It was a stern, you may think, a savage teacher. When you find the laws of nature any more gentle, it will be time enough to fault it. I believe that it was simply a reproduction in revelation, of the laws that are now working in every man's own experience.

2. Now look at a pleasanter side of the matter. The hope of the world's redemption was involved in the purity of the Israelitish race. The promise of Eden was made to the woman. The promise which made the Israelite the covenant-child of God, was the Messiah, who was to be born of the tribes in the order of nature. Thus the greatest of curses and the greatest of blessings were alike held up before the mind of the faithful servant of Jehovah, to stimulate his faith and to make the retreats of his home sacred.

At the settlement of Palestine, as soon as the tribes began to have permanent abodes, the most of the

law-cases, so to speak, were on points relating to this matter. Before and up to the time of Isaiah, the promise of the Christ-man was held in generalities. After his time, it was still possible to read his great prophecy of the Messiah, without much straining of the word: "Behold *a young wife* shall bear a son whose name shall be the mighty God." This method of partial clearness in the promises certainly held up to every woman's mind the necessity and the favor with God of a chaste monogamy.

3. One thought more on this important matter. The religion of Moses made the sin of idolatry, in which a man was unfaithful to Jehovah, the synonyme for the sin of infidelity in the wife. And their history is a curious study, in tracing the means by which the two sins were made utterly detestable. One ruins the home. The other ruins the nation. One brought every misery and contempt on the single family. The other sent all the families in the nation into bondage, and gave their fair city to be the possession of the owls and satyrs. The two helped the moral teaching of the people. As they became more religious, they became purer at home: as they gained blessings at home, they became sounder in national life. Now to come back to the two persons whom I fancied as setting up their home,—the lover-time of married life, with them and with us all is a season of peculiar *trust*, not only in each other, but in the continuance of the softer faiths of innocent hearts. A little spice-gale of Eden is still perhaps allowed to

float out of the cherub-guarded gates, which imparts to this one moon of early married life its romantic lustre. If there be one single idea which is then uppermost, it is that of fidelity to each other. It is an idea that gives its grace to our highest conceptions of religious grandeur—as St. Paul showed in willingly confusing his precepts about married duties and “Christ and the Church.” You can then imagine the gratitude to the law-giver who had thus guarded their homes for them. They were being educated in the great laws of life and civilization. Whatever may have been the sins of the nation as a whole, there were happy homes among the tribes, which owed their being to these laws of Moses. More than that, we who have inherited the Gospel from the Jews, owe them the laws and customs, which now consecrate home for us. It is the dream of the fanatic, that these ideas, which we live by, are the teaching of each man’s private genius. They descended to us, from that education of the centuries before Christ. They were incorporated in the very rudiments of the Gospel scheme, in order that they should not be left again, to the changes of unaided reason.

I. The religious education of the children, was left mostly to the family. It is fashionable, with certain classes of Christians, to rather despise the laws of Moses, as the temporary and arbitrary expedients of a carnal and rude system of thought. They forget, that in its great outlines, that economy was the simili-

tude of things seen by him in the Mount of God. In other words, he saw the things *of the unchanging truth*, and was commanded to incorporate them visibly in symbols and ordinances. Hence, if this be the real view of his work, we have in the law, the shadow of the Gospel: that is, if we find an expression of God's will in the one, we are to expect its answering line of will in the other. In two things, this remark will be found useful.

II. Every child of a family in Israel was as much in covenant with God as the parents were. As the one great expectation of the nation, was the coming of a King, in the order of nature, the rite of the covenant kept all of them in mind of that hope. It was the covenant of circumcision. It was the covenant made with children. It was received by every male child, on the eighth day of his life, on pain of excision from the commonwealth of Israel, if it was neglected. Passing all else that it may have meant, I turn to a single idea, which all of you can see was in it. The child, though born in sin, as ours are, was always under one covenant-consciousness and education. Suppose a traveller should tell us, that on the coast of Labrador, there was to be found now a tribe of people, who had this singular custom. Whenever a child was born, they took it and cast it out into the cold and ice of their horrid winters; and then gathered together in their snow-huts and gave thanks to God for the child, and joined in prayer that at some future time He would mercifully



accept ~~the~~ homage of the frozen urchin and restore him to life and make a man of him. Do you say the notion is simply monstrous? It is. Hardly less so is the dogma of original sin in Christian sects, if it is removed from the twin dogma of the divine acceptance of our infants, immediately after their birth, or ever they begin to sin. That we are born out of health in soul, is as certain as that we are born inheritors of death in the body. We cannot give that up. But to accept it, in its verity; and at the same time to allow that a child is compelled to grow up to man's estate, before we can feel that it is just as much in covenant with God as we are, is to my mind, the parallel custom of the tribe of the coast of Labrador, to which I have referred. It is monstrous. It is against nature, against reason. It must condemn any system that allows it. If men do not feel it to be a curse, it is because nature is milder than logic: because the orthodoxy of the heart is triumphant over the heresy of the head. In the case of the law, there was nothing of this frightful error. The child was *in the covenant*, as much as his father. At twelve or thirteen he merely went to the temple and accepted his place in the nation. There was no break in the covenant-consciousness. In the home of the Israelite, there was never the horrid fear of a mother, as she lay awake at night; "Will my son ever hereafter be a child of Jehovah? Will he some years hence, when he grows up to be a man, be converted and join the synagogue? Will my daughter



be ever saved by grace, when she becomes a woman?" No! as the shades of night gathered over their home, and the sense of weakness came over them, as it will over all, the wolf and the hungry lion might howl around them, and seek what they might devour, and the satyr and the jin might shriek in the night-winds to daunt them with superstitious terrors, but no thought of the Lord their God ever lent its horror to their fears. They had their own distrusts and anxieties about their children, but it was not a part of their religion to exaggerate them, by self-inflicted torments. Their children were with them in the same ship, and took the same share of their temporal and spiritual fates, whatever they might be. The priest and the scribe could not interfere there. The child was put into the covenant generally, with the assent of the congregation of their neighbors, it is true; for it was a national rite, but, by the father's right, and by the mystery of the mother's pains. They had not learned to glorify God for a religion that separated father and child by dogmatic perplexities, for half their lives. We have. Alas! that it is so!

II. The common covenant rite of the religion that came to Moses from God, was *the act of sacrifice*. It was emphatically, a family rite, a social rite.\* There was

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\* "No trace of an hereditary or caste priesthood meets us, in the worship of the patriarchal age. \* \* \* The chief of the family, *as such*, acted as the priest. The office descended by birthright, and might apparently be transferred with it."—*Smith, Dic., Art. Priest.*

no such thing then, as now is very common. No one member of a family then, could, so to speak, get off into his own particular life-boat, and put on his own peculiar apparatus, for self-preservation, and claim a religious isolation for himself. Of course, I take it for granted that men and boys differed then as they do now. I am speaking to the single point of the religious education of their homes. You may object that "they had no spirituality." Did David have none? He was a very sound Israelite. We use his poems and hymns still. They show great spirituality. He knew how to commune in his chamber with his God, and have his repentings turn within him. I claim that they were men, just as we are, and that we are men as they were. I delight at seeing a family now, all in the same church of God. I do not mean just now all in one denomination even; but, one, in which the horrid question of the eternal damnation of any orderly member of the same household is not the sore spot under all their lives. I hesitate not to say, that there are schemes of piety in vogue among us, that make it as hard as possible to be at peace with God. By that cause very many families are divided. It is in such cases, as if the parent should bring home a statue of heroic size, and command all the children to stretch themselves daily, until they should grow to its hugeness, on pain of his eternal displeasure, so long as they did

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It was late in the history of the Israelites that this feature of religious offering by the head of the family disappeared.

not reach its size. I warn you; that the reaction to this mode of religious thought has begun already in our country. The meaning of some things which have been going on around us this winter, is, that the opposite extreme of laxity is beginning to make head. But take, for illustration, a family, as it is likely there were many in Judah; say, for instance, the household of Jesse. See how sacrifices were teaching them. Some May morning, he calls the household together, under the shade of the trees, and announces to all that he has been dissatisfied with the discords and jars of the family. No servant or shepherd is left out: how can they be? Is there ever a family religion in which all the members do not take part, in all that goes on for good or ill? The head of the house discourses of the duties of each, he brings up the sins of each, that affect all. He tells of the pardoning love of the God of his fathers. He checks Eliab for his overbearing temper towards his brothers. He warns David, it may be, of the dangers of pride. He does what a good father can well do in all times. He restores peace and amity among all. Having done this duty, he takes the chosen animal and goes to the tabernacle to offer his atoning sacrifice for the sins of the household of Jesse the Bethlehemite. All take part in the offering. All accept the duties and receive the advantages of his action. The absent are not forgotten. The religion of his people is a household religion. His home is made sweeter by his gift. The bands

of home-life are bound tighter by the deed of sacrifice. They sleep the better for the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb on the altar of Jehovah. It was a home religion. It taught all to reverence the parents and in them to learn to reverence God, who was the great Father of them all.

To conclude: there was one other element in the Hebrew faith, which, I believe, is not denied to the Christian religion. There was no promise of immortality in the Pentateuch. Its promises were realized here. If a man kept the law he should be rewarded by it *on earth*. In other words, the law was the chart of this voyage, which you and I are now making. It points out the quicksands and the whirlpools, that lie in the way of all of us alike. If one would make it the man of his counsels, it would keep him in the way of health, peace and long life. I seem to hear the Apostle saying the same of the Gospel, when he tells us that "godliness is great gain, having the promise of this life and of that which is to come." At any rate I am not disposed to grant the Jew any advantage over us in this matter. Now think of the promises which were made to a pious Israelite, under the law. The great heart of Moses seems to have swelled with the mighty theme, as he bent himself to the pleasing task of telling the blessing of the good and pious servants of Jehovah, in the long future before them, after he was gone. "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God,



to observe to do all his commandments, which I command thee this day : that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth : and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." Then follow the list of blessings of happy homes, till even the ground should seem to testify to its sympathy with the culture of a wise and temperate race. The psalms are pastoral lyrics on this theme. No one is more to the point than the one following that in which the text occurs. Imagine how it sounded, when it was rolled forth by the ten thousands of Israel, standing on the steps of the temple, and believing in a God who thus made his people happy. It was a *Song of Degrees*, that is, a song of the temple steps, as the tribes came up to worship. "Blessed be every one that feareth the Lord ; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands : happy thou, and well is it with thee. Thy wife is as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house : thy children like olive-plants round about thy table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion : thou shalt be the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel."

Were they happier than we are in the possession of these promises ? I think not. Does the Gospel, in lifting our thoughts to the future home of the saints, refuse us any one of the good things of the



ancient people of God? I think not. We too may form in procession and sing this Song of Degrees in the porch of any Christian Church. Or if we cannot, the fault is in ourselves, and not in the promises of the Son of Man, whose knowledge of life was learned in the home of a peasant of Nazareth.

I have heard a learned professor of science say, that in his judgment, the nations of the world will at last find the metric measure, which they must adopt to be the cubit of the ancient tabernacle. Of that I am no judge. But I would have you, my brethren, whose homes act on mine, as mine does on yours, try this cubit of the tabernacle in their adjustment.

I. Measure the relative duties of man and wife by it. The heresy of the day, that is in my judgment, '*damnable*,' is that which makes the marriage tie, the sport of our wild winds of passion and the jargon of fantastic theorists. It is the idolatry of Astarte, the foul queen of the Sidonians brought back again. Alas, what home can be pure, in the flow of outward defilement, that runs in the sluices of every newspaper that one takes up? The adulteress of old was stoned, by an avenging community. Every man took a hand in it. Ah! how savage in me not to shriek over such inhumanity! I do not shriek, on either side; certainly not, to revive any such law now. But, if I saw a man deliberately sending clothing which he knew to be inoculated with the plague into a peaceful community, I would not break my heart, if they should hang him as high as Haman.

And no plague of earth is more accursed of heaven, than this.

It is said that the pope has made the Virgin Mary the patron-saint of these United States. It is very kind of him, to deprive Italy and Rome of her services. But would that Protestants and Catholics alike would keep her in mind, in our war with all impurity. May the thoughts of that innocent heart be the queen-thoughts of our homes. It is a cult of which we cannot have too much.

II. Let us establish our homes on the foundation stone of the faith, that they are the real educational institutions of the moral and religious life. If it is the will of God, that we, the elders, are to kneel daily and thank him for his mercy in saving us from hell, and then with a sigh, to think of our darlings, as in the gall of bitterness, beyond our reach or help: beyond the reach of the logic of the appointed teachers of Zion; waiting for adult consciousness, before they can have hope of God's favor, let us bow the head, and bear it as we can. But if it is, in a way, only going back to repeat the old-time idolatry of Molech, then let us not bow to it, nor in any way give it place, no, not for a moment. Mark, I am not insisting on any one form of dogma. I am demanding of the theology of the Church, that it be at least as merciful as Judaism was, and keep our families unbroken, at least, as long as time leaves them so; in other words, that we hear the voice of nature re-echoed in our Church faith. With all such helps,

our homes may still be to us schools of sorrowful experience, for we have here no continuing city, any more than Abraham had. We too seek one to come, which hath foundations. But, in our sorrow, we shall find better comforts, than we can have in ill-guarded homes now. May the Lord so build the house that our co-operative labor may not be in vain in the building. May He keep the city, for after we have done all, He alone can keep it. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so—that is in guarding this city and guiding this building—He giveth His beloved sleep.

### III.

## THE HOME OF JESUS.

*“And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them : but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.—*  
ST. LUKE, ii. 51.



THE home of Jesus, if we could see it as it was, would doubtless excite something of the enthusiasm of the devotee for the shrine of his adoration. At first thought it probably suggests to you nothing that can be in any way satisfactory. The veil of oblivion has fallen over it. The effort to recall it by the help of any sound data that remain, would be vain. Apparently, Providence has aided the process of oblivion, in this direction. It is strange on any other theory than that of a supernatural guidance, how this writer, Luke, could have summed up the story of eighteen years of the life of his chosen model in the few words of the text. I can often comprehend the motive of an objection to what Luke has said, but I cannot see how the *silences* in his story can be explained by any consistent canon of skeptical criticism. He is

telling 'in order' the things which were most surely believed among Christians about the life of Christ, and he drops out of the order the period which must have been as interesting in the instance of Jesus, as of other men. In this he is without a parallel among Jews or Gentiles.

This blank, uninspired writers labored to fill up. Many of the stories that come to us from the dark recesses of legendary lore in the ancient Church, are highly respectable. If they are not authentic, we are rather inclined to regret it. We wish to believe them, even when we are compelled to allow that there is little or no ground for doing so. For example, the legend was current that when the holy family were fleeing into Egypt from fear of Herod, they were attacked by a band of robbers, two of whom were the men who afterwards were crucified with Christ; and that even then, in that early adventure, they manifested the same difference of disposition, which marked their conduct on the cross. The legend is one of the stories, which, as it were, filled in the outlines of the brief account of the Gospels, and which were invented in scores, by the loving simplicity of the rude Christians of the Primitive Church. As we too often feel the meagreness of these outlines of the inspired story, we are tempted to wish that something more of spontaneous credit would attend these supplementary additions. But in the case of the childhood of Jesus, it is hardly too much to say, that all the legends, which would gene-



rally help us in such matters, are not only paltry, but are sometimes positively immoral. They are after the manner of pre-Raphaelite paintings, quaint burlesques often of their subject. When they occur in the midst of documents that are claimed as veracious, by parties in the Church, they help to give the air of weakness to more serious matters. Nothing is more emphatic to my own mind, of the truth of the inspiration of the four Evangelists, than their entire freedom from the puerilities of imagination, in which some of the primitive Christians revelled. This remark applies not only to the written legends and apocryphal gospels which have come down to us, but to some of the statements of the men, whom, from their early appearance, we call the Fathers. The imagination was true to their Oriental blood and training. It was both vivid and credulous. Lay down any one of the inspired Gospels, and take up one of these apocryphal writings, and you have passed at once from the ground of solid, sober reason, into the region of the Arabian tales. We delight in the saints and martyrs of the first bitter days of the religion which they nobly kept for us. But it is not the delight of affectionate respect for the vividness of their imaginations.

A few instances will show my meaning clearly. The Arabic gospel of *The Saviour's Infancy* is perhaps the most open to these criticisms. It is a compilation, from some books which were probably in use at a very early date. It states that this story was

found in the book of Joseph the high-priest, who lived in the time of Christ. It tells us, that the infant Jesus, lying in the cradle, said to His mother : "I am Jesus, the Son of God, the Logos, whom thou hast brought forth, as the angel Gabriel announced to thee ; and my Father hath sent Me for the salvation of the world." Again: the 'lady Mary' presented to one of the wise men, who came out of the East, a portion of the clothing of the infant. He took it back with him to his own land of the Parsees or fire-worshippers. All the great men of the country came together, and made a feast. They light a fire and worship it, according to their custom. They throw the linen cloth into the fire, as a religious offering. The fire burns down ; and they "took out the swathing-cloth exactly as it had been before, just as if the fire had not touched it." On the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt, astonishing miracles attended their progress. They reach a city where is a famous idol. At once the city is moved with extraordinary excitement. The chief men throng the temple to learn the cause of this agitation. The idol speaks, and informs them, that 'a God has come secretly among them.' And then, to their horror, it fell down and perished. In another town they come on a wedding party, in which the bride is dumb. On her kissing the infant Jesus her speech is suddenly restored. Afterwards, the work informs us, our Lord did 'many great miracles in the three years that he remained in Egypt.'

If it were only stories of this sort, which are rather interesting for their pious simplicity, we might rest content with them. But, even as divines have often, in more logical ways, perverted the spirit of the gospel by their reasonings, so these legends are open to more serious charges. They misrepresent the truth. They tell us, that when he was seven years old, Jesus, in play with other children, made images of various animals in clay. He then amazes the other urchins, by commanding them to live. They fly or run away in the sight of all the boys. The parents of the other boys taboo him as a wizard. Not long after this a skeptical boy offends him in his play. He uses his power to slay the child on the spot. We read that he does not allow his father Joseph to work hard; but stretches out his hand towards any job, which is too much for his genius, and the article which is desired comes into shape, of itself. At twelve, He explains to a learned scholar; "physics, and metaphysics, hyperphysics and hypophysics," with all other kinds of science. Unfortunately, the historian had not the wit to properly retain and commit to writing this valuable information, or we had been spared many troubles since. This learned discourse occurred in Jerusalem, and was a part of the three days' occupation of the boy Jesus, when He was lost from the company of His parents. It is natural, therefore, to contrast all this with the very sober and common place record of the Evangelist. In that record, Jesus made no useless

display of his power, wrought no revenge on his injurious enemies, and taught directly no physics or hyperphysics. I repeat the remark, that it is a strong proof of the restraining hand of some One far greater than any mortal man, which is seen in *the silence* of the writers of the four gospels. If miracles are useful to build up moral life, they may be analyzed freely. They should never offend against morality as it is taught by their ideal. If miracles are to give testimony to a messenger from God, the story in the gospels does that, and no more. Somehow, the Evangelists and only they knew just where to stop. Who taught them, and taught no one else, Christian, Jew, or Pagan of that credulous age?

We turn to the scene of the text.

Mary, after her three days' search, found Jesus in the temple, sitting among the doctors, "both hearing them and asking them questions." Do you say, that he was doing some miraculous work? The gospel leaves you to say it of your own mind. It is not there. Do you fall on your knees in wondering admiration of "God manifest in the flesh," and attribute this to the Omniscience of the Deity rather than to the untaught simplicity of a pure child-wisdom in the peasant boy which touches the 'traditions' of the elders with the spear of Ithuriel, and shows them to be false and mean. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." Is it not possible for excessive orthodoxy of creed to overshoot the mark and reach the



same results as superstition—that is a willing, in place of a necessary ignorance? Christ was perfect man, and it is the pure innocent boy to which I would now direct your thoughts. For myself, I do not doubt, that he was a perfect boy, and had in him at this time the spirit to ask questions and to make replies, which in the line of our common humanity, are always astonishing, when we meet them in pure children. It says that all the rabbis were amazed at his understanding and answers. Well they might have been. They had the habit of being so. They never were cured of it. Wrapped up in the folds of their traditions and corruptions of the law, it was the simplest thing in the world, to amaze them. Such rabbis never fail to be amazed. Men become enchanted by the pride and pomp of power, and sleep on the posts of duty. They cover up the word, and like Eli, say to their wicked sons, who are fattening on their immunities, “Nay, my sons, nay!” and the Samuels—who come to tell them that God is calling them—always do amaze them. It is well for us all to note it. But the simplicity of which I spoke, is seen in this manner of telling the tale. He “amazed” the great men of his nation. He none the less turns back at the will of His mother, though He showed her that he knew His true place to be in His own Father’s house.\* He turned his back willingly

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\* It seems certain that the form of the words, which in the original is ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Πατρὸς—in my Father’s—means to convey to



on such scenes and went with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them for eighteen long years more.

During that time I look for the home of Jesus. Unlike all common men in his teachings, He alone always spake of His home in heaven, as always present to Him. He went to it in due time, for the good of others, but for Him there was always this double, or rather this higher consciousness of the presence of God, which distinguished Him from all other men. He revealed this to Nicodemus: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which *is in* heaven." He has left no records directly of His thoughts of His home on earth. It was none the less true that our generalizations are as just on that as on all other points. If the transient has not been revealed, it was none the less genuine. If monks and severe thinkers would cast discredit on earthly joys, we choose to reject their conclusions, and see in this same method a sweeter logic and truer induction. It is possible to get at some of the main characteristics of the home of Jesus without the aid of legends. It was certainly a home in the ignoble hamlet of Nazareth. It was a home of contented poverty. It was a home of pious rustics. It was the home of a humble, uneducated mechanic.

Nazareth was a small village of Galilee, and is still

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the mind of the Virgin, the idea that Jesus knew the story of His birth. It may be translated either, *My Father's house*, or, *My Father's business*.

very much the same as it was then. It was like any of the small towns lying on the hills to the north or east of us. There are three kinds of homes; one, the life in cities; the next the life in solitary farm houses; the third, that in villages. Most of you have had a personal knowledge of all three. For twenty-six years of His life Jesus dwelt in the village, seeing the same people, and accepting the lowly conditions and laws of such a life. They educated him 'in favor with God and man.' Who here that has any pleasant recollections of boyhood, does not find his mind going off to sketch the conditions of such a life. No matter where it is spent, the chief laws of human nature are the same in all men. If Jesus grew in wisdom as in age; in other words, if he was a real boy, we can look at Him as such. We may judge him by the common laws of boys; in some things the boy is always one and the same. He is not yet rubbed down to one common measure of the busy world, as men are. He has an outlook of his own. Put your divine and doctor and man of business together, and they can all go back of any distinctions that they have grown into, and recall the early time, before they knew or cared for anything of the kind. The play-ground, the woods, the swimming-place, under the shade of the willows, the orchard, the trout-brook, the breezy hill-top, from which they could look off to distant blue mountains, these were possessions that were theirs. They educate us, they live with us till the last things.

Nazareth had its own claim to be the boyhood home of Jesus. It lies among the hills of the southern ridges of Lebanon, just where they sink down into the plain of Esdraelon. It is in a valley running in a wavy line, east and west, about a mile long, and a quarter of a mile broad. The hills that shut it in are about four or five hundred feet high, with rounded tops of glittering limestone, sometimes 'white-hot in the burning sun,' but diversified by the shade of fig trees and olives, and by the fields of waving grain. The hollyhock and the oleander grew wild there. Hedges of cactus divided the few enclosures from each other. The fruit of the pomegranate, orange, fig and olive probably exercised the virtue of the boys then, as you and I can remember, other fruits did the same for us, in the long time ago. Small, solid stone-houses, narrow streets, and in the rainy season, fearfully muddy ones, make up the picture. In the map of my recollections of boyhood there are two prominent objects of nature, which never fail to come up to my memory; the running brook, and the hill-top. A little rivulet ran down through the basin or meadow land on which the village of Nazareth stood. But the view from those hills—may we dare to see the son of Mary standing on one of the highest of them, growing in wisdom; opening his great eyes with wonder and looking off to the scenes around him; beginning his wisdom where ours began, in childish wonder, at all the things which he saw. As he stood there, if he looked to the north,

the peaks and ridges of the great mountain chains of Lebanon rose one above another, farther and farther away, to where snowy Hermon, the monarch-mountain of all Coele-Syria rose in imperial majesty, the pride of the land. In the west, the long ridge of Carmel stretched away, until it bathed its mantle in the blue waters of the Mediterranean. The great sweep of the bay of Akka was in sight, with its shore line of white sand. Southwards, lie the broad plain of Esdraelon, and beyond it the mountains of Samaria, with that sacred hill of Tabor, on which He will yet be glorified. The villages of Galilee dot the landscape on every side; and the boy recalls the tales of his mother of the heroes of his race as he looks towards Gilboa, Endor or Taanach. The whole landscape is said to be, "most beautiful and sublime;" and the book from which I have been quoting, has this comment: "It is easy to believe that the Saviour, during the days of his seclusion in the adjacent valley, came often to this very spot and looked forth from thence upon these glorious works of the Creator which so lift the soul to him." One place in or near the village itself, is marked as having interest for us. It is the fountain in the north-eastern portion of the village, now of course by immemorial tradition, called *The Fountain of the Virgin*! The well-worn path still leads to it. Of the identity of this spot, I believe there can be no doubt. We can see the poor mother as she walks along this lowly path, bearing her pitcher of water upon her head, and her boy running at her side.



We can fancy all that has happened to us, if it was natural and innocent, as happening to the peasant son of the village carpenter. He was a boy in all points tried like as we are, only without sin. There He learned the same lessons that we have had set to us to learn. As we look back, and feel a smart in the old conscience of memory at the follies and the wrong-doings of our own youth, we see Him, in the same scenes, only without such errors and faults. He was protected by no ineffable mystery, that He could not sin. If He had been He would not have been a boy, but only a cherub. He came to be a man. It is true that the veil of oblivion has been permitted to fall over the most of His life, but the comment is emphatic, that He was without sin. The silence of God is wonderful. We say, in our curious doubtings, that is all we know of Him; but really that is enough. That is all that it can do us any good to know. We have, set in this emerald brooch, the one image of our need, *a sinless boyhood*. It tells us of an ideal purity, that has once been a fact on earth, which is all the more to be longed for, that it is so seldom realized by others. Why do we wish to know the very features of the Christ, which have been lost to earth? which are as far from us as ever, though all the great painters of Europe have struggled to make them real, when we have the ideal image in our hearts, of the perfect life of Christ? So is it with the boy. We have only to fancy what our homes would have been, if we had had more of



His sinlessness, more of His subjection to His parents. We can recall the evil that we have caused, or the good that we have prevented; and turn to that one household, where in one guileless memory there were no such regrets. That youth of ours we cannot recall. Let us do what we may to prevent the children from the same regrets. In one sense, I think that all the painters have done us great harm. They are always making the scenes of the home of Christ, as they think that they should have been, in æsthetic splendors. The lowly life of a villager has been lost sight of, in the fanciful glories of the Italian-Romish school. The true paintings of Christ are not yet made. The land of freemen has not yet raised up a race of men who really accept the faith, that the highest glory is in the education of the manhood that is in us. We cry out in half-questioning admiration of some artist's conceit of a little boy, who, standing in the sunlight, makes accidentally, a shadow of the cross before him on the ground. We have yet to see the great, healthy boy of Nazareth, in his happy obscurity, with marks of daily toil upon Him, and dare to look at Him just as if He were like boys that we know; and feel that He may be so, and be none the less worthy to be the Lamb of God, to take away the sins of the world.

Alas ! no present saints we find ;  
The white cymar gleams far behind,  
Revealed in outline vague, sublime,  
Through telescopic mists of time.

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The footprints of the life divine,  
Which marked their path, remain in thine ;  
And that great life, transfused in theirs,  
Awaits thy faith, thy love, thy prayers.

II. *It was the home of decent poverty.* In other words, it was the home of honest working people. How long Joseph lived, no one can now tell. Tradition says, not long after the time of the text. We know no more about the state and circumstances of the family than that Jesus committed His mother to the care of St. John, when He died, as if she were then a widow ; but we can decide nothing from that circumstance. Nor is the relation of the Virgin to Joseph, nor indeed, any of the questions of the ingenious builders of theories about that household ever to be settled, save by the dreams of monks, the decisions of the Pope, or the wishes of our hearts. He went down to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. What they commanded, He obeyed : they, mortal, sinful and uninspired rustics ; He, the only-Begotten, the unsealed font, as yet, of the transforming power of God, willing to be as lowly, poor and rustic as they were.

“ Where now with pain thou treadest, trod  
The Leader of the saints of God.”

Homely toil and unremitting industry, were never honored among any men as they were among the Israelites. No one of them was ever allowed to live a life of indolence in his youth. No matter how

much his family might have of wealth or distinction, every boy was to prepare for the changes and chances of life, by learning an honest trade. American Christianity has half-forgotten this virtue. If, this day, any angel from heaven had power to let us choose between the payment of the debts of this whole country, governmental and individual, and the establishment of this one rule, on as sound a basis as the Jews had put it, the choice would be easy with wise men. It must remain among the curiosities of piety, that we Christians, while we are always exalting the life of Jesus as the very model of the divine ideal for every man, do always manage in some way to avoid this, its chiefest characteristic. The virtue of the most Christian community is far behind its model on this point and probably will be for some ages yet; till the time that the ideas which now dwell in the brains of the poets, will again begin to take hold of the common sense of men. If any young man here is restless at the slow progress that he is making in the world, let him take home to his heart the fact, which is in some sense the chief one about Christ; the fact of this long, long, patient waiting, and this unnoticed toiling in the little obscure village of Nazareth. Had he none of your nature? Was He that sublime being of the painters only, who looks down out of the canvas, in imperturbable serenity on the tears and frettings of us little men as if He had had no part in them? "O," says one, "be converted, and then you will be like Him."

Well! let every one of us be converted. But in heaven's name let it be, by the example of Jesus, not by something else in order to get at that. Truth is the only real converter at the last. God works by it. My young friends! take this example of Jesus to your hearts, and let it be printed on every restless ambition. He who had the world on His shoulders, who carried our sorrows, was content to *wait*, and see the world roll by him; see his opportunities pass; see the time of education slip from him; see the day of youth slide slowly by, as he was working at the coarse, unintellectual trade of a village mechanic. What sort of a man, does such a life produce at thirty? Are we quite prepared to see the Sinless One such a man, as we can understand? God, we know, came down from beyond the stars, to bid us look to the lowly, that we might learn of Him, by loving man. Are we sure that we accept the lesson, quite?

Suppose one of your children to be on the crisis of a fate to-day, that might at forty give him little or no refined culture, no intimate acquaintance with the outer world, and would produce only a quiet, sober and honest peasant; would it not be something hard to accept? Would it not be easy to tempt any one of us to do some pretty hard things, and make some ventures in morals to prevent it? And why? If our life here is the beginning of another and an eternal one, then is not the first of all saving faiths this: that the servant of God can always afford to wait—



can never afford to risk his honesty? Far above all other knowledges, sciences and refinements, is that one by which Jesus was destined to be the model for the whole race; the knowledge of a soul at peace with itself and in communion with God. No villager in the heaviest of clods ever was more entitled to a serene mind and an eventless life than He was. The spirit that Nazareth produced in Him is appreciated nowhere now more than in the quiet and lovely piety of rural life. The one temptation of our social life here in cities is the notion that we can do all things by genius, and accomplish wonders on the start. The danger is, that even the common virtues and laws of morality are in danger of suffering from this shallow conceit. It is not true. We shall find a change in this matter as the ways of men become more settled among us. The piety that lives by flirts and starts is not that which is learned in the home of Jesus. The virtues that at last are those to be valued by men, not to say by God as well, are learned in "quietness and in confidence." The grace which we all may seek for in calming the passions of unrest, the hot ambition of pride, the swooping excitements of the race for pleasure and wealth, is the grace *to sit still*; not as the stupid and the indolent may do it, but as they only can do it who feel such faith in the providence and love of God that they can afford to wait.

Could we see the true picture of the home of Jesus, it might help us in doing this. It might help us



to the wisdom which may lead us to cultivate the virtues that quieted the nerves and stilled the pulse of the Son of Mary. God grant us grace to love those virtues, and to see our children growing in that same wisdom, and in favor with God and man, that marked the life and created the example of the Saviour of mankind.

Let us draw from this brief record of the youth of Jesus these home-lessons, which the errors of our time make necessary for us all.

I. The value in Christian faith of *unsullied, contented innocence*. He lived obscurely, but no thought of any evil connects itself with Him. We are often reminded by the one-sided theories of Christian life, which are common among us, of a great danger in this matter. It is quite too easy for parents to allow a theory of original sin to destroy the proper estimate of the piety of children. They anticipate *badness* in them. They neglect the purity of thought which lies at the foundation of all true life, as if impurity and naughtiness were the native growths of their lost souls. Are they "by nature born in sin and the children of wrath?" Be it so. Are they not by the gracious covenant of Christ "born again of water and the Holy Ghost?" In other words, is not the living truth as "it is in Jesus," a seal of this higher possibility? Or must we all forever look to see the path of the Prodigal Son, the Slough of Despond, and early wantonness the only gate that can open on the way of life? God forbid! The youth of

Jesus is as really a vital part of His Gospel, as is His death. Let us ponder it, till we grasp an idea of the duty of preserving the gifts of the Spirit to a child as pure in unstained innocence, as if we could see the original sin of its birth cleansed by a miracle of grace.

II. *The continuousness of piety* is an idea of the life of Christ. Look at Him as *man*—and being such—the example of all His followers. Matthew and Luke, or Saul of Tarsus—or no other man is “The Way, the Truth and the Life.” He only is such. He only was always our example. He only has given us a whole life sacred to God. It is the rule now for every one to be able to mark the very period of conversion. The One to whom we look for life *was never converted*. It is foreign to our idea of Him, that He ever could be. We say boldly that no dogmas should tolerate the common notion, much less create a common opinion, which is utterly alien to the unity of His life, and condemned by reason. The home of Christian boys and girls should be to them the nurseries of a pious life as continuous as that of Jesus—and the only final faith of the Church must begin at the Font. “Born in sin” is set off by ‘born again’ of a spiritual blessing. If nature is evil, grace meets it before reason comes to the infant and guides its willing feet into the path of life. Christ says to every mother, “Suffer the children to come unto Me.”

III. Lastly, the patience of the boy, living inglori-

ously in the village home of Nazareth, and toiling at the trade of a mechanic till he was thirty years old, should calm the heady and troublesome passions of our young people. Let us once catch the ideal of a pure youth, contented in the state, "in which it had pleased God to call Him." He threads the valleys, pants up the steep hills, looks off from their historic tops to the sacred places of His race—lives a true life, an all-comprehensive life of a true man, saint, prophet, poet; He has stirrings of soul, which bring heaven down to Him; He fits Himself for the great work of God, to be the Reformer and Redeemer of all men, the Desire of all nations, the world's one great thought and God's one great Word, and (as I love to look at it) *He grows* up to it in the *pabulum* of a village life and the habits learned at a carpenter's bench. True, God's Spirit 'overshadowed Him,' and the soundings of His own soul reached into the Eternities, but we see Him as man—as the son of a woman. We have a thread-line of thought by which we can track Him through these mysteries of the creed; by which we are in Him and He may be in us. Our homes may teach our children the mighty lesson, to wait and be patient, to value the pure, and true, which are above all human distinctions, and to drink water out of the moss-covered well that runs by the lowliest household. I would have you read the lesson of the home of Jesus, as our Quaker poet has read it, and in his own noble simplicity and purity of manners, has largely translated it to

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American men and women, how by His, our homes  
may "transfigured" stand. With Him I would have  
every true man able to say

"Henceforth my heart shall sigh no more  
For olden time and holier shore ;  
God's love and blessing, then and there,  
*Are now and here, and everywhere."*

## IV.

### THE PASSION OF HOME.

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*"But the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.—ST. MATT.  
viii. 20.*

HE meanest of animals is provided with a retreat for rest and safety; and the greatest and best of men had no place to lay His head. This contrast, which has in it the charm of poetry, by the very form of its expression, has also a profound religious stimulus to our ordinary sympathies. The Son of Man appears before us as utterly self-denying, and destitute of all the common enjoyments of the meanest of God's creatures. The affections go out towards Him, in a pity, which does not stop to reason about Him. There is a flutter in the very nervous currents of the heart, which demand of us that we shall go to Him and help Him, as if the Helper were most helpless, before we stop to ask what this wretchedness means. It was because of the nearness of these sensibilities to the sublimer principles of religion, that the system of Christianity was, at the first, largely adopted by the tender and suffer-



ing people of the world. Those who themselves knew most of the evils of homelessness, who were despised of men because of poverty ; whose ignorance laid them open to the assaults of the powerful and violent ; in a word all the poor, for whatever cause, were first drawn to this Saviour, who was poorer than they, and who drew them to Him by the powerful cords of personal sympathy. As such people must always be in the majority in the world, it will always be from their ranks that the Church will be largely reinforced. It will always be true, that which was said by the first Bishop of Jerusalem : "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to those who love Him ?" This is true, and the reason of it will always appear. The poor naturally will look to another world, for the enjoyments which are denied them in this. But I do not wish to dwell on this fact. I point you to the just inference from it ; *that the home-passion is honored, in this choice of poverty, by the Redeemer of mankind.* It was evident, in the Divine counsels, that the highest proof of the earnestness of self-denial, which the messenger of heaven could offer to the world, would be this willingness to be lonely and forsaken, while in His mortal state. It is the grandest tribute that can be given to the strength of the natural passion or affection of men for their homes. Next to the exhibition of the death of Christ on the cross, the strongest motive that is

offered to convert us to His ways, is this fact, that He lived this life of self-denial ; as if it could not be gainsayed, that He who could do it, was a messenger of some higher sphere.

On the other hand, St. Paul reckons among the signs of the last "perilous times," which are to come on the desperate and ungodly world, the want of "natural affection." Natural affection is emphatically the love of home, of wife and children, of relatives and nearer friends. It is natural, not spiritual. It belongs to the common nature of all men. It is in man as man. Sometimes it may not be found in a Christian man, to his discredit. It may be sometimes found in a very imperfect man, and then we are forced to admire it, though we fail to honor the rest of such a character. The poem of Leigh Hunt, of the virtue of Abou-Ben-Adhem turns on this discrepancy. We are led by the charm of the sentiment of affection for all things human, into the half-implied heresy in the lyric, of a doubt of the truth that is unchangeable ; *i. e.*, that we must love God supremely.

I take all, at this time, as proofs of the strength of our natural love of home. If the great Missionary to this world, chose the denial of it, as the readiest proof of His Divine commission ; if it becomes a test of the degeneracy of the reprobates of the last times of confusion and every evil work, that men lose their love of nature in their own families, then it is a powerful passion. It needs to be acknowledged and

understood. Its relation to religion is all-important. We cannot neglect it and be happy.

One perversion of the truth, is always on the surface, in this matter. Enthusiasts and formalists alike mistake the use to be made of the example of Christ. The former would have all men seek the divine life *in the sublime endurance of poverty*. Their ideal would be found only, in "cool mountains and the desert air." The monks gave the first and the most enduring disturbance to the system of Christ in this particular. As the centuries have gone by, the influence of this disturbance has become less and less; but it exists to-day, in the minds of men, even where its only effect is to make them unresting and inconsistent. Formalists pretend that the example of Jesus can only be had by those who, after their conception of it, do formally and by the letter just as He did, and deny themselves visibly before men, as He did. Instead of looking at the forms of life as necessary, and the varieties of its conditions as allowed in the Church of Christ, there is just enough of this spirit of formality in us, to incline us to neglect our duties, as men under the common law of nature.

I say, that the passion of home is one of the strongest of our passions, and, if rightly guided and cultivated, it is capable of the richest fruits of grace; if left to the blindness of itself, it is equally capable of the contrary effects. And I would not be afraid to maintain the proposition that the majority of Chris-

tians seem to be afraid to speak of it as an element of the religious life at all. They seem to think, that because the Son of Man had not where to lay His head, that it is somehow wrong for us to have them. They half-suspect that we ought to be more respectful to the form of that life, and imitate the foxes less. They do not see that the true inference is, that the passion of the birds of the air and the great law of nature that teaches the foxes to provide for themselves a home, is no less the law of man. It is that natural affection, that he may not be without and cannot safely despise. The true religion must recognize it. The religion that does not recognize it, is not that which approaches God, first of all, as a Father, and finds in Christ, an "Elder-brother." It is not the religion which, if it give up a home on earth, does it in supreme love of that which it surrenders here, to have it returned in the New Jerusalem.

*The love of home is a passion.* It is a natural passion. The very force of the words, "Stranger and pilgrim," tell us how strong it is. The history of our religion repeats to us the same moral. The national history of religion began in the love of a "country" which God promised; a land flowing with milk and honey; a land of corn and wine, of oil-olive, and pomegranates; a land of peace and prosperity; where in calm and still home-life, the faithful race of the chosen children of God should wait the workings of the great plan of salvation. It lies under all our virtues of the social life. It is the synonyme for



patriotism. It is the source of the virtues that unite society into one healthy body. The origin of the word *religion*, according to some scholars, is, from the fact, that it—*re-ligo*—binds men together into one society. It is stronger than the love of life. It was doubted of the apostle, whether a man could be found, who would die for another; though, for a good man, one might be found willing to accept such a fate: but it has been the maxim of all states, that it is sweet to die for one's country. And the kernel of the love of country, is the love of the home which that country protects.

Our personal distinctions show the same strength in this direction. We carry with us the fealty of the native air in which we began to be. The poetry of men, in all ages and all tongues, is filled out with the enjoyments of this sentiment. The chief difference between classic poetry, and that of the Bible, lies in the fact that the Bible catches these colors, of this natural affection, and uses them to paint the glories of the city of the future.

Again, *the disease of home-sickness* tells us, very feelingly, of a fearful power in this passion, when it becomes the master. We all conjure up the poor Swiss soldiers of the French army, who were forced to fight in wars in which they had no heart, as they bowed like sick children at the sound of their mountain songs. But, is it necessary to go so far for our examples? Our own society is out of joint enough, to furnish us with abundant examples of the terrible



force of this passion, when, under the madness of disappointment or poverty, it breaks over the banks and sweeps away the courage and self-control of individuals in wild confusion. That fierce wild German tragedy, in the newspaper lately; the father driven to despair in these great cities, for want of work; seeing the two dearest objects that a man knows, slowly starving to death, before his eyes, in the midst of crowds of Christian people, and with no hope; his home slowly ground down and destroyed by the remorseless fates, without his power to help it. I tell you, that it is well for us that we are not called to judge such a man; as in a madness, that is not insanity, but rather the intensest sort of mental action, he rushes uncalled into the presence of the Judge, with no better plea than this: "I offered in sacrifice, these two innocents, my wife and child, to save them from suffering. They are not suicides, I am: they are not murderers; I am: visit on me the sin; they at least are safe, in the rest of the grave." I say, I am glad, that we are not the judges. May God keep us from the temptation, when a man, in mercy to his wife and little child, chooses to send a pistol ball through their brains, as his dying legacy, and paternal benediction.

I wish to emphasize *the fact of this natural passion*, for it is one of the noblest, as well as one of the strongest. Noblest, as it is the *protoplasm of the religious life*. *Protoplasm*, says the dictionary, is a word of botany; and means "the soft nitrogenous lining or

contents of cells." In other words, there is in the minute cell, from which the great tree is destined to grow, certain contents, about which men talk with prodigious learning just now, as the substitute for a Deity. This much is to my purpose, and I leave the rest. This content of a microscopic cell, is so far beyond our reach, that we only know this of it: in one cell, it produces the giant oak, in another similar cell, it produces the wee bit daisy; in one, the food of man; in another—for all that we can see, just the same—the poison that maddens him and withers his bones, and consumes his flesh, "like a moth fretting a garment." All this is true of the protoplasm, that yet defies the finest effort of the microscope. If it shows any way to get on without a Creator, that the bulky form of an elephant does not better show; I confess that I do not see it. The protoplasm is none the less there. I said that the passion of home, is "the nitrogenous contents" of the cell of the heart of man, in which his religion takes its rise. His religion is a seed, of which Christ represented Himself as the sower. The human heart He spake of as so many sorts of soil, into which this seed of the Tree of life is cast by His messengers. It takes root in it. It takes its form and size from the soil. The soil is this natural affection. Whether it is to bring the seed to perfection or to starve and blast it, is not a chance of a miraculous system of arbitrary grace, *but the law, established in the family, in which the heart is educated.* Some hearts are rocky, that is, they are

destitute of the experiences of the natural affections. They have had no home culture. No kind father led them by "green pastures and still waters," so that, when the other Father came to them, they could transfer the love for the one to the other, without changing the tap-root; and grow on without a transfer of their smaller roots from the truth. Or if they had such a father, they had been ungrateful. They had spent their time of early growth in perverse ways.

Into other soil the gospel seed falls. Here the cares and pleasures of the world spring up with the seed and choke it. What are these cares and pleasures, but those of our daily experience in the homes that we are all alike making. May I dwell on this thought for a little? Take a boy, and we need not go far to find him. He has a home, in which the whole atmosphere is purely religious. I do not mean now, is religious talk, or incessant religious works in special deeds of charity. I confess, that I believe that the best things of life and God are those of which men talk least. I mean now, a home where the duties of life are all performed so easily and naturally that the atmosphere is pervaded with the spirit of wisdom. Now the first meaning of the word *piety* is love of parents. It is the first piety of a healthy soul. It is the decree of the infinite Father that the natural father is, for a time, infallible to a good and healthy child. It is natural to a boy to believe that his father cannot do wrong: In the very fibres of his frame and his father's is the sameness

of substance. The unison of beat is in the two hearts ; yea, that mysterious law, that underlies the very decalogue of Moses, that the sins of the father descend to the son, is true on the other side as well ; that the right opinions and principles of the progenitor are the heritage of the offspring. The home is the protoplasmic mould of the future life. Now, let us drop out of sight our sect-systems of faith for the moment. My position is that the boy who is blessed with such a home, sound in all points, is like the good soil of the parable. He can grow, as did the Son of Mary, in wisdom and in favor with God and man, as he grows in age, and never know, and certainly never need to know a break in his religious life.

Let me make one other point just here, and I am in tremulous earnest about it. No matter how good a boy may be ; nay, the better he is, and the keener his religious life is, there comes a time with all real men, when the shell of boyhood drops off from us. The time comes when he wakes to the realities and duties of life ; when the light and beauty of mere dreamy childhood falls away. Once he is like the infant of the poet, in the swing under the trees. He thinks their tops are close against the sky. There must come the time when he wakes

“ To find he’s farther off from Heaven  
Than when he was a boy.”

Poor Byron, you remember, said, that “ the passage from youth to manhood is over the bridge of



sighs." It is true of all men who ever come to much, in after life. Now may I ask, in all charity, is there not a religious school which has seized on this natural fact, and made a wrong use of it? A deepening of the religious life after the peaceful growth of childhood is as natural and as necessary in good men, as the efforts seen in certain plants, which seem for awhile to be given up to the one duty of shedding only perfume on the air. Then comes a marked change in their whole manner of growth; and they show that a decree has gone forth, in the change of the seasons, that they shall begin to live only for the coming times. So is it with the human plant.

Now this law, in my judgment, is forced out of its place, when it is made to do duty for what men choose to call religion: when they make it the one grand object of the Gospel, and depreciate all the other periods and all other duties of life; when they change the Church into an institution for converting prodigals and generating believers born out of due time, and neglect or pour shame upon the steady growth and progress of a virtuous life.

The boy of whom I spake then, may be supposed to await this coming time of his conscious life. He is still in the palace and church of his home. He does not yet act, by way of the self-imposed motive. He does not yet assert himself. He is not ashamed to be seen wearing the collar of his youth, the sign of a docile spirit. He has been up to the Temple and seen the Rabbis there; he has asked them ques-



tions as well as answered theirs. He has seen beyond the limits of his father's house, and heard the moanings of the great sea, and has now and then longings to put out on it, and begin for himself. To him, religion may be heard, speaking in the tones of the old home-teaching, which is always the same: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother; for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." He, as did his Saviour, goes still down to Nazareth, and is subject to his parents; now by a higher motive and with a more quick reward, than when he was an unthinking boy. There are such boys—thank God for them! If there are not more, stop and ask the question, Whose fault is it? We have them in hand, for the tender time of youth. We claim that virtue is better than vice, religion than sin. Why is it that they are so few? May it not be in us? That we do not believe in the innocence of youth? That our standard of piety is somehow distorted? That we are busy with another sort of ragged school of ingrates, who have been left to wander abroad, until the fresh graces and innocent habits of home-life have been lost forever? Is the common notion of the oneness of the religious consciousness, from youth to old age, such in the churches that there is the proper encouragement to our children to look on their duty to God, just as they do on their duty to their neighbors; as, not only something that they are always bound to pay,

but something which they always *can pay*? If it is not, then it is wrong; it is unscriptural; it is unnatural and unreasonable.

The foundations of the true religious life are all laid in youth. The motto on the old clock in the school-room where I was taught the classics, was true: "Youth is the seed time of life." The Church of God is built on the passion for home. On the boy or the girl that you are forming now every day, is the future piety of the Church dependent. The children are in the soft influences of the spring time of life. The sunlight of the spring is peculiarly actinic, as the photographers would say. You can never take a picture at any other season, as you can in the early hours of a spring morning. The sunlight of autumn is lurid compared with it. It is the light in which nature means to mature the fruits, and it follows another rule. Let then your children have the full advantage of the prime impressions of their vernal faith. Let them have the unfailing resource of a pious home, and they will have a strong rock of defence, in the later times, when, alas! the cares and temptations of the busier life will make it very hard to catch up with those who have had this advantage. I respect the prodigal, if he is sincere; but I do much more regard that son who remained always at home with his old father, even if he was in the wrong, in finding fault with the love that burned in the older man's heart. Any one may have the "fatted calf" for anything that I may say. Give

me the record of the other: "Son, thou art always with me, and all that I have is thine. Thou hast never taught me the joy of this hour, by the long woes of a previous despair." Let any one rejoice in the raptures of a late conversion. God bless them! I am humble enough to accept the unmentioned growth of those disciples who always followed the Lord. It is a blessed thing, if some can be born out of due time. It is infinitely more blessed, that the rule is that we are usually born in due time and by an unfailing law.

Finally, then, as an inference from all that I have said: let parents take due heed of the law of reason and of religion alike, that in holiness as well as in education, youth is the seed time of life. If St. Paul could appear to us for once, I would ask him to preach to us from two texts, and tell us all that passed through his mind as he wrote them. I see the generous heart of the old man beating quicker as he wrote these words to Timothy, his beloved comrade: "When I call to mind the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded in thee also." Or again: "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." Remember that he said this of the Old Testament; for it was that volume that lay on the

lap of the aged grandmother, and fired the zeal of the heart of the village boy, at the foot of the Karadagh. You, brethren, let me hope, have recollections which bring to your remembrance the words of the Apostle to the Gentiles, with a sweet persuasive force of its own.

Of all the possessions that you can leave your children, there is none like this: leave them the reverence of a religious fervor, as they say in their hearts, "Such was home to me; there, at the fountains of my being, I learned the ways of eternal life. From a father's instruction, I took the doctrine of wisdom:—from a mother's law;"—(mark the word:—It was a father's instruction; he reasoned about it, and proved it by chapter and verse; but *it is a mother's law*, oracular, infallible, not always capable of a reason, nor needing one in words.) From that *law*, "drawn from the heart's deep well," I received the "chains about my neck" which have been often as amulets, against the enticements of the wicked. The *tap-root* of such a piety is struck far down in the passion of home, and defies the drought, and laughs at the wild winds of doctrine. I presume that I am not ranked as very bigoted in my place among men. But there is a bigotry that is a priceless treasure to any man. It is the memory of a pure home; of a wise father, a holy mother—not only in the intellect, but also in the very fibres of the frame,—in the undefined refinements of the soul; the sweet breath of the chaste conversation, the amenity of the little morals that shed



beauty on the common actions of each passing day; the high sense of the rights of others, which teaches justice, not more as a duty to another than as the nobler privilege of the actor himself; the religion which seldom questions and less seldom doubts; the serenity of spirit that instinctively adopts the higher laws of a Saviour's example, by its innate dislike of the opposite; in a word, a piety that, according to the old maxim, finds *use a second nature*. Such a piety is that wisdom of which the proverb says: "She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her." Any other piety may suffice to tell the tale of a late repentance; but *late repentance must never become the rule*, or Christianity will be damaged by the compromise. It was the piety of the Son of Mary. He learned it at his mother's knee, where it had been always, and yet most frequently is, taught to the saints of his people. It sustained him in the deepest poverty. It was his consolation, when he was compelled to mourn that "He came to his own and his own received Him not;" when, He alone, of all His people, could say with truth: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." It can do as much for us, if need be.

## V.

### HOME-VIRTUES.

“And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do : seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation ; and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him ? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”—*Gen. xviii. 17-19.*



HIS text has one striking feature. It shows the Divine Being, reasoning with Himself, about the ways and means of the first covenant which was about to be made with man after the fall. Three men came to the tent of Abraham. He extends to them the usual hospitality of his people. One of them promises the gift of a son to the aged man, and hears the incredulous laugh of the aged Sarah. They rise to resume their travels, and look or walk towards Sodom. The kind old man goes a little way with them. And the Lord, or as it ought<sup>d</sup> to be read, “the Jehovah, said.” And then the text follows. I use it to-day to make one point of it. *The virtues which are taught in the revealed religion, are the virtues of home.* Notice,

that as yet, so to say, God has not committed Himself. The whole matter of a revealed system of religion in the Mosaic record is as yet in His own keeping. He has not done anything which requires another thing to follow. The Deity is represented under the form of a man, debating, as it were, whether He shall tell Abraham what He means to do in the ages to follow. The point on which He seems to turn and come to a decision is the fact, that he knows him, "that he will command his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord." *The authority of the parent is thus made the corner-stone of the primary religion.* The virtues of all revealed religion were to be taught at home. They are still. In our zeal for the complicated machinery of religion, for which I thank God as useful in its place, we are always inclined to forget this law. Religion seems to rise up in our minds as if it were altogether ecclesiastical or sacerdotal—some few works of devotion, some schemes of missions, some set modes of almsgiving, and assembling in public to read the Bible and listen to preaching. The virtues of good neighborhood, "the justice and judgment" of which the text speaks, seem to belong to the inferior agencies of school and home. Is this true? Is it so in the great scheme of revealed religion? I think not.

The first faith, if we can consider this man the Father of the faithful, began in the creed which is contained in this text. It comes from a Council that

was infallible, being the words of God Himself. He states as the reason for his favor to Abraham :

I. That he will be a model father, in commanding his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord.

II. That he will teach them to do justice and judgment.

III. And that the end of this obedience will be, "That the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." It seems to me that the point is proved, and that it needs no more words. May I use it *here*, at our own doors? The same law holds good with us, as with him. Let us see if it does. The first virtue and the first religion is the healthy obedience to just authority. Make all the exceptions that you please, and bring it down to all reasonable results; I am content to take the residuum. There are two modes of obediences in my mind; *one*, that of a child to its father; *the other*, that of a man to God. I suppose, that the most radical reformer has some sort of respect for the family system; in which, if only for occasional convenience, there is some sort of control required. If he has not, I wish him no farther punishment than to be compelled to dwell with the Eli-fathers and mothers of spoilt children. If he does not improve his thoughts, he certainly will abundantly exercise his patience.

I take for granted that there is some sense of authority left in the minds of men, for the Omniscient



Being in whom we creatures of the dust live and move. I maintain that the virtue of obedience to this latter authority is *to be learned at home*.

I will go for my instance to a plantation life before the war. In some things it came far nearer the life of this particular man Abraham than any other that I know of. The planter had a power over his household, children and slaves, which was very like that of the shiek of an Eastern tribe of Arabs. I propose now not to show the right or wrong about slavery; but to talk on this point in hand, just as I did then.

The first practical curse of the American system was that it created *a practical lie* in the household of the plantation. Every man taught his children, that all men are born "free and equal." The nation believed it. It was a subject of patriotic rejoicing. More than that, the course of politics made it an emphatic thing. White men held to it as a most precious right. The spirit of independence in the white was rather unreasonably active, and was intolerant and fierce. But the trouble was, that in every man's house there were the blackest proofs that it was not true. There was, so to say, a lie in every man's right hand. The colored people were not free, nor independent: nay, it was the unspoken terror that haunted the hearts of all, and often took shape in wild dread of all manner of excitements, and fears of insurrection, that they would ever become so.

When the Danish government proposed to the islanders of Santa Cruz to prepare the negroes for

freedom by educating them up to it; it also made it possible, by exercising the power of the home-government, in compelling the slaves to be educated, and the colonists to educate them. We had no such central power. We had no place for the white man to learn the advantages to him of personal obedience. We had no other avenue out of the perplexity than the bloody path of violence and war. In my judgment, it was all for want of the right teaching of home. Nothing could induce a proud, independent race, to accept the modification of the principles of that Declaration, which, they remembered, originated with one of themselves. They went to the extreme of State-rights, on the one side; and to the other extreme, of irresponsible, individual power over the slaves. The result could have been only evil, in the end, no matter what the outside world might have done. It was inevitable, that either the white race must have sought refuge in some sort of autocratic power, either an oligarchy or a monarchy, or in the abolition of slavery. It was as plain as the day, that the dissonance was destined to create trouble. It did do it. Many a Christian, from pure conscience, retired from the slave States, to escape it. The homes of men cannot be built on a falsehood. No matter what the Church or the State may teach, the vital teaching is, at last, that which we receive at home. The slaveholder became the fierce duellist. It was the only solution of his perplexities. Yea, it was this very fact of resort to violence as the last appeal, that at

last reached the Senate hall of the capitol of the United States, and fired the northern heart, in the winter of 1855-6. As I stood on a gloomy day by the cold corpse of the actor in that scene, and read the burial service over him, I felt then, as I do now, that he was only the victim of a civilization, which neither he nor I could understand or make right. All has passed. It is now rather as a dream, that we refer to it. Let the wrath be buried. Let us take heed to the lesson which it teaches us. The teaching of home is the vital teaching of life. If there are dissonances there, no matter how pure and exalted may be the public documents, that tell of the duties which we owe the State; no matter how scriptural and catholic the sentiments of the popular piety of the Church, the end is ruin. The safety of both Church and State is found in the homes of the citizens. If the morality which is learned there be pure, the people can bear any amount of misgovernment, with the patience that endures evils, which are always in their power to remedy. When the necessity arises, the people taught in home-virtues will remedy them. But if the fountains of domestic life are corrupted, then the end is not far off.

The question then arises, are we now sound on the matter of the government of the family? In the main, we are. The very *rages* of our reformers testify to the sense of a want of sympathy from the great body of the people. The noises of the few, who are resolved to reconstruct society, prove, as yet, their

zeal rather than their success. We may be patient with them as yet. I confess that I feel that one danger to our peace arises from the unsuspected side of our religion. And in the line of that fear, I offer these remarks, as to the authority of those relations in our homes, which, as they were first to appear in the divine esteem and in the order of providence, so they cannot yield to any other authority, outside of the circle of home.

Abraham was priest by right of his fatherhood in his own family. This was the first Succession. It began at the gate of Eden. It will endure to the end of the world. No priest nor preacher is to be allowed to interrupt the relation between the head of the family and the members of it, without loss to all concerned. It was the fact, that Abraham would command his children, by which the Lord was moved to bless him; not that he would provide some one else to do it. It is the part of the coward in us, that we are so willing to permit vicarious interference in the affairs of the family. We are more or less used to one and another sort of kindly interference from outsiders, and we receive it as if it were the best thing to do, to receive it. Any evils in receiving it seem so small in comparison with other advantages which have become traditional, that it may seem almost the part of an infidel to question the right of interference in the pursuit of such advantages. For all that, the thing is wrong. The true head of every household is the parent, and



his power over the family, in matters of vital character, he cannot delegate to any other.

It seems to me that there are two considerations which present themselves here, and deserve our care.

I. That the true obedience, which we all need, is not taught by *words*, by either liturgies or preaching, or any sort of verbal catechisms, so much as by actual life.

II. That, when it is successfully taught, it of itself runs into and determines the nature of all religion. Perhaps it may be said, that it is religion.

I. *Obedience is taught by life, not by books or by words.* Both the latter may help teach it; but they do not communicate the thing. We may suppose a case. Fancy a child who could be kept in entire freedom from all manner of experience, till, in some way, its mental powers could be suddenly developed up to the point of understanding the lore of books without the intervention of the living authority. Let it then be supposed to go through all the maxims and dogmas of a thoroughly logical, authoritative scheme of perfect education: just as a student of navigation traces the coast line of a difficult region, in his room by books and instruments only, without ever going to sea. The former runs over in his mind all the reasonings of the men of old, which go to show that one person must obey another, simply because he had the accidental circumstance imposed on him, without his own consent, to

be born after him. Take from him, if you please, all the passions which make obedience difficult. Remove from him equally all the affections, which make it "lovely and of good report," and which experience alone can develope. Let the problem be purely intellectual. Let it be, in a manner, altogether mathematical. Given: B, who is born after A. by some twenty years. B is to A in the position of obedience. If B desires a thing, he can have it only as he consults the superior authority of A. If he crosses the pleasure of A, he must be deprived of certain pleasures and advantages, and subjected to the opposite pains. He can be at his ease only as he fulfils the relation thus established between the two. Here, then, he questions: Who established the relation? And the answer which he gives is *the corner-stone of his religion*. Intellectually he sees no need for any such relation. He denies the authority. He sees no need for any such God. Why? Because he has no need in the mere intellect for any such idea as that of *Father*.

The intellect is sexless. It is the chart only of the soul. It is the mere tracery of the fine lines, that tell where the tidal currents run the wildest; where the dangerous headlands are to be found and where the reefs are the perils of the sailor. I tell you, brethren, there has been a tremendous *life power* established in you all, before your intellect began to ask the reasons of things, or to assert your own existence. It is as if your closet student of navigation should definitivel

assert, to an old tar, that on such a coast, the lines of the land run in such or such a direction and extend just so far into the sea. He tells him, "Put your helm up, and run your ship ten hours and twenty minutes exactly, on this line that I have marked out for you; then put her about and steer directly into port on this line." The student goes by the chart. What is so fixed and certain as mathematics? Do we not spin the fine lines of thought by them, and tell to a minute, when the distant star will again cross the disc of the transit instrument? And if so, who can doubt their decisions, in the small matter of a pitiful line of a shore on the surface of the earth? Your sailor laughs at you; he knows that after all the proper calculations of the ephemeris, and the finest measurements of the chart, there is a world of knowledge, of storms and currents, and variations of needle, that is all his own; into which you and your closet speculations cannot be suffered to come. It is the real sea, that he knows by experience, with its varying winds and changing storms; its contrary currents and shifting sand-banks, which no chart can fix and no almanac of the heavens determine for him. He takes all you can do for him, gladly; but he does his work by other rules than those which make up your philosophy. There is this same sophistry put off on us, in the matters of life. They, who for some reason have lost the conservation of home, and are dead to its refinements, parade their charts before us unblushingly, and reason out their nice little theories of

the equality of mind of all the human species. They seem to have the intellect on their side, and are skilful to entrap the unwary into acceptance of their schemes. Meanwhile the great currents are running on, and one terrible tragic cry after another comes up on the air, of the shipwrecked and forlorn, whose barks have been stranded on the sunken rocks of life by these unskilful pilots. It is your boy, who has no experience of a home, who by the force of unaided reason, attempts to make his way without this greater teaching.

An old clergyman was once asked by an anxious mother: "At what age her boy would become a moral agent?" His reply was a shrewd one. "Madam, how old is he?" "A little more than two years." Then, if you have not trained him yet in moral duties, you have lost two years." I have been eighteen years an intimate in the nursery, and I have never been half as anxious for the teacher of the minds of my children, as I have for the *nurse* of that infancy. You remember that in the old nations of the world, the faithful nurse was honored next to the mother, and her support in age was held to be the sacred duty of all good men. We mistake this training. Obedience is not merely the listening to the "thou shalt" and the "thou shalt not," of fixed law. The real authority of daily life is not cast in the stern moulds of tables of stone or iron. The laws that you and I obey quickest are expressed in a look. There are impulses as powerful with us as if the thun-



ders of heaven were roaring them to all the universe, when they drop out in the "still small voice" of a holy sentiment of love. Is there anything of more force, than the instance of the power of the love that rules in the Christian world—than the look, which Jesus gave Peter, in his hour of shame; and "Peter went out and wept bitterly." I tell you, that a family is in the desert of waterless sand, when the authority of it is mostly exercised by spoken rules; when the ring of the mother's voice is the familiar sound, from morning to night, in perpetual protest, with its dreary, "don't," and "you sha'n't." The true law of home is the same as it is in the Church of the great Father. It is the royal law of liberty. But it is none the less the law of the great Father that rules in nature. There, the soul that sinneth, must die. I do not mean now, the body will die, but the soul: it dies. And the signs of a dead soul are rebellion and unbelief. The sun shines and the dead body does not see it. The finer instincts of the soul die. A man does not have them. They are dead. He, or what is the best about him, is dead. Let him alone: "Let the dead bury him." He goes to saloons, and has his ghostly meetings with the ghouls there. He finds out the places where the paths all lead down to the chambers of the dead. Only take this fact for granted, the next time that you hear of these vagaries of the radical school, who would make our homes desolate with their pestilent theories of rebellion.

Authority must always be asserted by us over the evil and the disobedient, even if its only influence be to compel them to corrupt the quicker. There are some advantages, in the long run, in corruption. It is the recuperative process of nature in removing things wasted and useless. But no one, in my judgment, is sound, who claims to be wiser than "it is written." The first of the pious saints was commended for that quality in him on which, at last, all the nations of the earth would be blessed in him; that he would lay the foundations of his religious teaching of his children, deep down in the hard-pan of family obedience. I have seen a child, in a spasm from the whooping-cough, assisted by its nurse, taking a strong grip of its wrists. Nothing more. How absurd, says the reason of your bachelor. Granted. But it is true, none the less. So the lovingness of wise parents is bound to surround the children, in all their ways; to be before them and anticipating all their dangers; looking out for them, heading them off at times as the shepherd does a silly sheep, carrying them in the bosom and accustoming them to the very sound of the voice as that which in time will dwell in their minds like a voice from between the cherubim. No book, no catechism—no preaching nor sacrament can teach all the arts of true love. No paper chart can convey to any sailor's mind the shade of the green shores, or the sweet perfume at which,

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“—— for many a league  
Old ocean smiles ——”

These things belong to a “jealous God.” He sheds them around your home. They are the graces of it. It was for this that He gave them. They are the colors out of which you are to paint the scenery of the other home in the skies. When St. John told men about paradise, go and read it carefully. You will find that all the colors that he used are taken out of the lessons that he had heard in the houses and synagogues of Galilee, illuminated by the tale of the love of God in Christ.

II. So, secondly, the one thing runs into the other. Your character as formed at home is the real groundwork of your religion. Two things are to my mind axioms, that admit of little reasoning and defy debate. *One* is, that the deepest instincts of religion are dumb, of themselves, until they find analogies to speak them out. *The other* is that human nature, in its deeper principles of life, never changes. You plant an acorn. A thousand years hence the fruit of it will be an acorn, and not a humble bee. In the line of the first remark, I say, the instinct of the human soul is for God. He dwells in the thick darkness. I let my imagination run out on one single line beyond Saturn, then take that space for a measuring tape and travel on ten thousand billion of world-cycles at the rate of speed of the ray of light, and see world after world rise and fall as I go by: see stars begin and last millions of years and go out again, as in a

moment; and at the last, I stop to take a bearing, and I am perfectly sure of one fact; that I am no nearer the outer limit of immensity and of God's infinite presence than I was at the start. I flutter back, on the idea that every atom of that space is infinitely divisible into the homes of animalculæ, which the microscope pursues on the other edge of infinitesimal thought. And then I know, that where ever, in all that space, up or down, I know anything, I know that law is ruling, and if law, then a law-giver; a spirit of all law, a mind that imagined and created it all, and a heart that made it all and found it all to be very good. You perhaps do not see it. I am not saying that you do. I say only, that I do. I can say more; that man, as man, always does this; that the earth is strown everywhere with the temples and altars that tell the old, old tale of his always groping after God, if happily he might find Him.

Now, this Being, who inhabiteth eternity, and makes His dwelling place in all space, so that he who takes the wings of the morning, and flies east or west, up or down, is never away from His goodness, or beyond the grasp of His power, is simply, utterly inconceivable. The words are emphatic: *He dwells in the thick darkness..* Do you try to deny Him? That is not helping you. The idea is the necessity of your own being. You cannot flee from His presence; for in this idea, we live and move and have our being. Now the one word, which eliminates



this idea into the light is this: *our Father*. The philosophy of the gospel is, that "the Son, who dwelleth in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him." It required *a son* or an *hypostasis*, which was to be called by that name, to reveal Him, in such way that all men could believe on Him and have a religion at all. It was so with all the saints, in all the ages, which are covered by the written Word. If human nature is the same at bottom, then it is so now; and it is still the sign of the bastard and the fool, to say in the heart, There is no God.

Now then, and I think that the point is of immense importance to right thought on a variety of subjects;—the father of the home is the sacred hieroglyph—is the real teacher of the Divine Father. He is the similitude of fatherhood, that any one of us sees in the Mount of Vision. He is the pattern laid away in the heart's deep well, and no plummet can reach down to take it up again; the pattern, that the later reason only fills out, to give us the notion of the Father of all men. The elemental voice-cry of the world's redemption is heard in this one message: "God so loved the world, that He gave *His Son*, to save it." And we go back to Abraham and his son; and we look down the sweet vista of our own home-life, and of other homes, and the idea takes shape in our hearts. We interpret the essence of the creed, not so much by the opinions of the venerable men, the bishops and

philosophers who made it, as we do by the love of home, that has made it a living thought in our hearts. We may all pray with the poet :

“ Dear God and Father of us all,  
Forgive our faith in cruel lies,  
Forgive the blindness that denies !

“ Forgive thy creature when he takes,  
For the all perfect love Thou art,  
The grim creation of his heart.”

The infinite God seems to speak to us, in the sacred retreats of home, and His word to us is : “ My son, give me thine heart.” Thus the religion of Christ is the religion of nature and of a purified humanity.

“ Christ’s love rebukes no home-love, breaks no tie of kin apart ;  
Better heresy of doctrine, than heresy of heart.”

One word then, in conclusion. If this be true, and it seems to me that I could array all the true things of Scripture and life, to illustrate it, then, brethren, how sacred are our homes to us ! How blessed is the household, where the parents are humble Christians ! How happy is his lot, who finds the thoughts of his parents always running on the parallel of his faith in the sublime dogmas of his religion.

Born at first of those who gave up so much for him, he was truly born again in due order, in the womb of their love. He entered the church of the saints, through the lowly door of his early baptism

and its appointed training. He was converted by sacred law, and became as a little child, before he was anything else. When he prays to the Infinite, he trembles back instinctively on the wings of that divinity, that whispers to his doubts, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall God?" If he bows his head in sorrow, he hears a word saying unto him: "As we had fathers of our flesh, who chastised us, and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live?" If he comes to the last and closing scene of all, he sings his death-song in the same sacred love of his heart's earliest recollections; and the "angels, leaning over the walls of crystal, hear," the simplest of all creeds become the grandest of all the *misereres*; "Father, not my will, but thine be done!" He is then, in the oldest and most expressive of comforting hopes, "gathered to his fathers."

Oh! ye, who have the links of young souls thus fastened on your own, how can you do aught but seek to consecrate yourselves and them at the altar of our common faith, and carry with you, in all the by-ways of daily life, for them, the blessing of our Mother the Church! How can you fail to make your homes the religious inheritance of your families? God help us to catch the music of the true faith of the Gospel, and reconcile for them and us the dissonances of common life.

So mould your hearts by the lessons of inspired

wisdom, that your homes may be evidently consecrated by the blessing of God the Father. So train your children that it may truly be said of each one of them :

“He worshipped as his fathers did,  
And kept the faith of childish days,  
And howsoe’er he strayed or slid,  
He loved the good old ways—  
The simple tastes, the kindly traits,  
The tranquil air, and gentle speech,  
*The silence of the soul that waits  
For more than man to teach.*”



## VI.

### MARRIAGE HONORABLE.

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*"Marriage is honorable in all."*—HEBREWS, xiii. 4.



WHETHER St. Paul intended to say, that marriage is honorable in all *people*, or in all the *things* and circumstances that belong to it, we hardly care to ask. Either way, it was a pertinent assertion, and cut across the errors of that age, and of the ages that have followed, about equally. The early heresies of the East assumed to be capable of teaching men a path of higher morality and purer religion than that which was revealed in the Church. The men who assumed to be the especial examples of piety, sometimes claimed a right to despise and abominate the rite of marriage, as the chain in which the foul spirit of evil sought to drag mankind into the slough of destruction. The Church has not yet recovered altogether from the perversions, which then affected her prosperity and usefulness in the regeneration of the world. The assertion is still as pertinent as ever, **in the one sense as in the other.** Marriage is honor-

able, in all classes of men; it is the same, in all things that of right belong to it. The Prayer-book has occasion to quote this expression of St. Paul, in the Office of Holy Matrimony. It goes on to add: "and it is not to be entered into by any, unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." It would appear to have settled it, that the signification of the text was, "In all *men*." But to this we may remark: that at the time when the book was compiled, that was the only question which was mooted. The other had ceased to disturb the consciences of Christians. The two churches of the East and West, which then held themselves to be the only final and infallible dispensers of the truth of revelation, unhappily persisted in attaching to the holy estate of matrimony the ban of ecclesiastical disapprobation. In our day and generation, very few persons are ever disturbed on the subject. Now and then some over-scrupulous reader of the Epistles, takes a momentary fright, at some of the sayings of this same writer about celibacy and matrimony; but it is not often of any serious continuance. The evil that troubles our peace now, arises from other considerations. The majority of Christian teachers somehow seem to give the subject up in despair. They leave it altogether to the novelist and to the theatre. The religious side of it is rarely presented with the soberness and plainness that it deserves. The ill-effect of this, in my judgment, is this: that it does not present itself

to the ordinary mind, as it should; as the greatest and most solemn of our relations. The greatest, because it is entered into by our own free-will: and the most solemn, because it has the paramount influence in our religious growth, always afterwards, to the end of life.

I am about to look at it now, only in its relation to the duties and powers of a Christian home. And in pursuing the subject, I shall follow the collocation of the words of the Prayer-book: that it should be entered into reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God.

I repeat that I look at it only on this one side; its relation to the home that it promises. It is the failing of the human understanding, that it is always losing sight of ideas, in the machinery that is employed, to carry them into effect. In the State, and in the Church, we always have need at times to get out of the hurry and bustle of the crowd of people and things that are, after all, necessary to accomplish the ends in view. If we do not, we will, before we are aware of it, be found worshipping our own bow and spear; be entirely engrossed in the machinery, which we have set in motion. Christ himself seems to have allowed this infirmity in the race. You remember, how often he almost rushed away from the noises of men who thronged him, into solitude; and refreshed his spirit in the silences of nature. He bids us, in something of the same prudence, to become as little children, in going back to the founda-

tion-faiths of the life that we are leading here. It might be hard to say how many men and women are losers in this way, in regard to this holy relation, but I think that all may take their bearings at times, and find advantage in sober reflection. Society just now is certainly at war, in many things, with any effort of two young people, who are about to enter into the estate of marriage, if they have a careful conscience as to the sober reflections that naturally belong to it. Indeed, at the very mention of it in this way, the light wit, or what passes for it, is at once roused to do its little utmost to dissipate all discreet and sober thought. Yea, even some fierceness of temper might be roused, as if the only becoming method of entering into this bond, must be the thoughtless and trifling spirit of the unbelieving world. Thus, the plain soberness of the Prayer-book, which is in this matter the voice of reason and the Bible, often falls on the ears of the youthful Christian pair, who stand at the altar, as rather the tone of a threatening and over-strained zeal of a past age. I hear oftener foolish remarks from this side of the subject, than I care to tell.

Now, marriage, in its relation to the future home, and of the immortal souls who are to inhabit that home, which is set up with the sounds of so much worldly hilarity and romantic thoughtlessness, claims a serious consideration at our hands. Here thoughtlessness is unbelief. It is infidelity to the God who instituted the rite, and blessed it. It leads to incongru-



ity and dissonance at the very start. It perverts the judgment. People do not think of its responsibilities. They must rush into it, lightly and unadvisedly, for they have no way of doing otherwise. They are careless, as to sober thought of what they are doing; careless by nature, for they are then young, and they are easily tempted to take the advice of the multitude to throw dull care away. They will not seek nor take advice of any older friend, and they must be unadvised. Is it at all to be wondered at, if they find themselves unprepared for the future trials of each other's tempers; if, in the solemn events which they must meet together, they are left to find wisdom as they can? Is it to be wondered at, if at this time we are continually patching up the rents of society? if the voice of the temptress, who glides into every Eden that ever was set up, finds them unready to resist her guile? if the very form of popular religion has become the weak effort to stem the torrent of our mistakes in the organization of social life? if it seems to be given up, by common consent, that men can really grow up truly religious in happy homes and never wander from them?

Let us take the words of the service of what is well called "*the Solemnization of Matrimony*," in their order.

I. *Reverently*. It is to be entered into reverently. This means, evidently, not now the fear of God, for that comes up farther on; but a reverent feeling, as to the relation itself. If what I have said here-

tofore in regard to the sacredness of home, is true, then the rite by which that relation is made natural and is blessed of the God of nature, becomes of the character of a religion. Older disputes in the Christian wars of the past leave their dust and grime on our holy thoughts. Marriage is not a sacrament. Of these there are only two. We want only two seals to the charter of the forgiveness of sins ; and for the purposes of theological warfare, we have settled among ourselves to confine the word to that single meaning. It is not a sacrament, for it does not need a priest to make it valid in all proper senses. No question of any apostolical succession can be allowed here. The late events in Europe, of the intolerance of the Church of Rome, is final as to the conclusions of the next age on this matter. The laws of this State are to us conclusive. But it will always call on the ministers of religion to ask the blessing of God upon it. He *solemnizes* it. Here, indulge me for a moment. The marriage service of this Church is generally allowed to be sound in construction. If you read it carefully, you will find that it does not profess, as our common speech does, that a minister *marries* the parties. They marry each other. They do all the active part of the marriage. He only stands by, as the official, to whom the State has delegated the duty to see to it that the laws are obeyed ; and by whom the Church has directed, that the blessing of God shall be invoked upon them. He sees to it that the requirements of the laws of God and man are complied with.

He hears the solemn promises, and with prayer and benediction proclaims the fact, that they are henceforth, man and wife. This fact throws the solemn responsibility in the rite chiefly on them. It belongs there. It is a solemn thing. Why?

First, to the two considered individually. They accept a bond, which was established in the original creation of the race—a bond that has its own responsibilities, to which all nature bears witness. They make a promise to love each other with a love which must endure through light and shade, through romance and reality, a love that is made *the model idea* of revealed religion. God has made them in such wise, that all the duties of the ten commandments of His law, are made to take a deeper and nobler meaning from their example. They are called into the secret places of the temple of God, and there learn the sublimer obligations of his will. The chiefest ideas of the Christian faith; nay, I will just touch on the fact, all the religions of the world, that have any meaning at all; all the idolatries of the races have revealed the necessity of this relation to the right understanding of the will of God. We rattle words over and over, never thinking where they came from. But a world without this relation, would be a world in which the Bible would be an enigma. St. Paul had this in his mind, when he said: "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." We exult in the acts of occasional heroism; when some brave man dares every danger, and rescues

some stranger to him from death. I read with exultation the account of the medals and the votes of honor that were given the last year, to the heroes who had plunged into rivers, or in one case, the young midshipman of the steamer Alaska, who leaped into the stormy ocean, to save the common sailor who had fallen into it, and I thanked God that I belong to a people which can thus touch the hem of Christ's garment in such instances of sublime heroism, and can feel the divine throbbing so near them. But as the angels look at it, the sublime of true courage, the very essence of the divine love of God, which brought the Saviour of men to earth, is the very element and pabulum of this calm, quiet relation of home life. If the angels of joy gather to hail the marriage of a youthful pair, the darkly clad messenger of death no less is there, to take note of the promises that invoke his presence, or defy his might, "till death do us part." There are secret societies of men, in which, I am told, the promise is made of mutual support and defence, in every danger from wrong or violence; but it is always done with one important reservation. This sodality allows none. It will have none. It comes to a youth, who has all along been in the dreamland of soft and selfish romance, whose imagination has been thinking of Eden, and of some bank, "whereon the wild thyme blows," and the wilder time flies; whose most serious meditation in life has been, thus far, to take all proper care of himself; whose very love of virtue has been reflexive, because it did



him good and made him respectable: and it says to him, and the manhood in him hears it with dismay, but not with recreant cowardice: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word." "Gave himself for it." Suffered and died for it—what that means, he will learn, in solemn truth, long after the romance that first played over his imagination has fled from earth, to meet him in heaven, if he has been true to the promises that he once so ignorantly made, with the sweet smell of flowers, in his charmed circle of Psyche and Cupid. It is because of this deeper meaning of it, that the apostle declared it an honorable bond and compact. Its heroisms are not rewarded by societies and states here; but they take hold on the very marrow of the soul of man. They are the glory of the race of man. They make the love of God a reality to our imaginations. Where that love is the model and rule; and it may be, thank God, even where people do not study all the theology of their daily acts in it, there is a true home. It should be reverently considered.

II. *Discreetly*, says the Book. There are two manifestations of indiscretion, which give me great anxiety as to the results: a religious and a social error. I am often led to wonder, whether they are any way connected. It is not, of course, intentional, but I put it to any man: if the idea of the best piety

prevails, that it is possible to be wild and even debauched, in youth, and then in some great and all-cleansing excitement, in a few days to get over all the ill-effects, all the stains and bruises of the previous violations of the laws of God, and become another man in Christ Jesus ; yea, and sometimes, I am afraid, it would be said, a better man for the previous tragic experiences—if this idea becomes once common in a community, the question in my mind is, does it account for the inclination of young girls to sacrifice themselves on the altar of matrimony, for some worthless and dissipated young man, with some such hope of him ? There are cases of this misguided infatuation, when a perfectly sensible girl, one to whose judgment we would defer in anything else, manifests a blindness here in the most solemn act of her girlhood, that is unaccountable. Tell her that the lover is wild, vulgar in his tastes, that his chosen companions are of the vilest classes ; that he violates the common rules of decency, that she grieves her parents, shames her friends, and denies her own womanhood by her choice ; and her answer is, “ That he has promised her to reform.” She is to be the fair Mentor, to recall him from the embraces of the syren Calypso, who has changed the young Telemachus for a time into the form of a beast. In every other relation of life, the dictate of common sense would be, *to let him first reform before you reward him.* If your son or your brother is in this temper, you wait for him to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, before you

reward him with your increase of trust. Only in our piety and in our "affairs of the heart," do we defy nature, and disregard the inflexible law of morals.

Now, I add one word only. The marriage bond, more than any other, requires the grace of discretion; that is of *the best sense*. It has little use for a fool, whether one of our common use of the word, or of the scriptural meaning: whether a man without sense or without virtue. The religious feeling is subject to laws. So is the love of the sexes. It is to the injury of any community, to allow that either is the sport of circumstances. Error in the one is pretty certain to be punished by trouble in the other. If a debauchee is likely to be changed in one day in our Church, in all the deepest principles of his duty towards God, is the girl very far wrong, who hopes for the same facility of conversion to operate in her behalf? The home of the whole life! No words can tell its importance to you, to take care that the foundation stone of it be laid in the exercise of the soundest discretion; to see to it that the choice, which is to secure or wreck your happiness for the long years of after life, should be one which can bear the traversing of all your friends. I know that I am running counter to popular notions. I fear that one half of you did not do it when your turn came, but none the less, I am bound to speak as I think; that the French rule is, in my judgment, far better than our own. You may scorn the opinion. I believe that the parents have a right to fight off the disasters

of their children, not to say their own distresses in their children, by every means in their power. At all events, let the word of advice be duly considered by those to whom it is of interest. It can do no harm, to intend, at least, not to begin wrong. Let the discretion in your choice be that which we can all admit.

III. *Advisedly.* That is, taking advice of friends. Individuality runs to seed when a member of a family violently disrupts the family ties, and makes a choice that is offensive to the other members of the same. I do not question the right to do this. I do not question *the right* to pursue any calling, even the lowest. The right is not the thing in question, at all. I speak of the fact, and of that only. There is a logic of facts, which the world always uses more than the young think. For instance, you choose feeble associates, beggarly minds, shabby companions. They are not very bad. They are not *very anything*. They are simply *beneath* you. Their tastes are vulgar. Their associations are all low. You go down to them. Very well, if you like it. You have the legal right to do it. Only do not complain if those of your own blood and your own circle, who had some rights in you, do not choose to accept your self-willed choice, as theirs, and go down with you. There are marriages that are not wrong. They are only mean. They are not sinful—only terrible mistakes. They are selfish, and that of the most shabby kind of selfishness.



"Oh! but would one hesitate in trusting to *the infallibility of a first love?*" That is just what I am doing. The infallibility of the first love, is the weakest of our beliefs. It is the creed of puerility. It is the whipt syllabub of our meanest literature. Let me, in a word, commend all its apostles and catechumens, to get by heart the first half-dozen chapters of the novel of Pendennis, by Thackeray. They are the very Augsburg Confession of good sense on this subject.

Your friends have rights in you. You may deny them; but you cannot get rid of them. You are to build up your home with many a stick of timber, that you will take from the homes of the members of your own family. Have they no rights of love, in the selection of its site? You cannot, unless with rude unkindness and ingratitude, cut the ties of nature, and set up a roof-tree in forgetfulness of the many kindnesses of the past. You ought not to try to do it. I know that there may be all manner of mistakes made by friends in giving advice, in such cases. That is to be taken into consideration. But the rule is still, that the rite demands that it is to be done, *advisedly*.

IV. *Soberly*. This is a special word. The others do not cover it. The passions of youth are to be set aside, as far as may be. Probably, no inexperienced person here looks at the matter of marriage in the light of sober experience. I am glad that they do not. They ought not. It is unnatural that they

should. The glow and halo of romance is as natural to our youth as it is lovely. It gives a charm to our early days, which I for one would not in any way dim the force of. But it needs sobering as to the dangers of a mistaken choice, or the young man or woman may soon wake up to the gloomy and stupefying knowledge that they have wasted the best affection of the heart upon an unworthy object. This is the *soberness* that is required. In this the wisdom of parents, or of older friends, is of inestimable advantage. The judgment of the parties is then, from the nature of the case, the most at fault. It is the more likely to be at fault by the ardency of the affections and the vivacity of the imagination. It is often sadly and ruinously faulty. Therefore, there is always need of the exhortation to soberness; to the coolest judgment; to that very exercise of a sound sense, which is the more needed the more we reluct against it.

V. And lastly. The rite demands *the fear of God*. Society murmurs this day, in all the little bays and coves of family life, because of the indifference to this requirement. An ideal home is oftener a dream than a reality. God never forgets the rules which he has appointed. He is as jealous as a lover over us. If He has meant our good, and we have disappointed Him, what wonder if He puts the means of recalling us to our first love, by allowing us, in our other loves, to reap the present discomfort of our folly; and in vain regrets over a broken covenant,

keeps us to the faith in a home above. There are laws which God has set for us, in the establishment of a home here, which cannot be violated, without loss, every day of life. A father sometimes says to me: "The promise is not kept with me: Train up a child and he will not go wrong." But the father begun wrong. He trained him wrong. He violated some law of the Creator, at the first. He has been reaping just what he himself most diligently or most carelessly sowed. There are valleys in the State of Massachusetts, wherein every family that has ever lived in them has been the victim of the disease of consumption. If a man chooses to place his home there, in the cold clammy fogs of such fenny dells, has he any right to complain of the Bible if he sees his children smitten down? We say, no.

There are valleys in Church life, where bogs and quicksands are to be found. The moral air is filled with fogs and damp, and the spiritual health is endangered. Men may not build their homes in such, and expect that they can avoid the consequences of their own folly. The promises of God in religion as in nature, require on our part the previous conditions of sacred obedience to all His laws.

What then *are these laws*? And what is this fear of God?

I. *Health.* In the matter of a home, the body is a religious consideration. It is the temple of the only incarnation that we know in these days, the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is a religious duty, to

remember it always; much more in the serious duties of home life. You must not despise it. Monks and hermits set themselves for ages to try and ruin it, or go counter to it in the ways of religion. It took revenge on them in dreams and fancies of the horrible, which had their origin in distempered brains and deranged nerves. Of course, you will not understand me as trying to determine the rules of any particular cases. That each man and woman must do for himself or herself. Let us allow the general truth, and do our share in applauding the courage that can stem the forces of the day, in trying to do right.

II. *Equality of position*, is best. I hardly like to call it a law of God, and yet I recall the fact that, when God did interfere in the matter, he did so in this very line. The Israelites were commanded to marry in their tribes. Probably they soon did so almost entirely, by choice and sound reason. The home which is to mould two minds into one, which marriage does, if normal, may sometimes do it against the grain. But why run such risks, to gain a lower good? The poem of "Maud Muller," and the sentimental sigh of, "*what might have been*," is scattered to the winds by the taunting satirist, who raises the opposite cry, of things *that ought not to be*. The things *that ought not to be*, you may depend upon it, gain the day in the long run. Money is often the disturbing element, in these calculations. We think that we Americans are always to be the novel people of the civilized world; that we can marry



up or down, hither and yon, as we please. Time will cure us of the notion. We have still a large share of human nature in our systems. The love of money is one thing. It is often a bad thing. But the education that money can give; the refinements, which it often secures, are facts, which cannot be denied. The advice that I offer, has nothing to do with it, of necessity. There are the rich vulgar as well as the poor vulgar. The *up and down*, of which I speak, is in the education and the relative refinement or coarseness of people. Let the bond which is to last for life be woven of the same materials that enter into the life every day. Female sympathy and imagination lead some of the giddy astray after that which is wild and striking. The sentimental fancies of a stupid and godless literature, are the constant heresies of vain and conceited people. But the instances of fatal error are few. They stand wide apart. Good sense guides the majority of our youth to the right choice.

III. *Unity of faith*, is certainly most desirable. I would fain enlarge on this thought, but my time has expired. Unity of faith need not be formal sameness in all particulars. Often it is with faith, that the party cannot change an hereditary education, of belief without loss. But the ideal home surely requires the full sympathetic bond of oneness in the deeper religious thought of the parents. God send His blessing upon all the homes to which you now go. Let us value them, as the first of blessings.

Let us look at them in the light of the last home, to which they are giving meaning every day; and so polish them by frequent prayer and constant thoughtfulness, that, as David said, the Lord may "bless them and us out of Zion."

## VII.

### UNHAPPY HOMES.

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*"What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper. Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt among them that are the enemies of peace.—PSALM CXX. 3-5. (Psalter translation.)*



FALSE tongue, a quarrelsome family, and an unhappy home, have often been the linked causes of human misery. As one wanders up and down our streets and beholds the extraordinary conveniences that we have collected together in our modes of living, how far his judgment may be at fault as to the real enjoyments of life—as to the sum of happiness within. Probably only the physicians and the ministers of religion may know the truth. Novels have intruded somewhat into the limits of ordinary life, and now and then they construct some pictures of family scenes that are not altogether imaginary. But the novel must always please, and the subject is not altogether pleasing. The reader will soon tire of the tale of fiction, unless the strain of his sympa-

thies be removed in obedience to the unities and no less to the inclinations of his desire to be pleased. Therefore the novel must be delusive and false to the dreary facts. It is different in the reality. The people in the unhappy homes cannot shut the dull volume of their wretched lives at will, or create the polite and compensating rewards that seem so sweet and proper at the beck of the fancy of the author. Think of it. A young man has been educated in all manner of knowledge of the classics and the sciences, except those of common things. He has been taught in church all the nice points of polemics, and is able to dispute in all the old divinities which have perished forever from daily life. He has read the poets, and wasted tears of tender sentiment on the imaginary woes, and thrilled with interest in tracing to a delightful conclusion the perplexities of crowds of ideals of the brave youth and afflicted maiden, which are the stock characters of the novelist. Lapped in the soft sentimental selfishness of his time of life, he has accepted certain ugly facts of his own experience as the passing accidents of a day. That sort of thing is to his mind only the trifling ruffle on the surface. He soon comes to his turn, and enters into the responsibilities of a family with as little notion of the laws of living, and as wrong notions of the wisdom which is necessary to secure his own happiness and that of those who are committed to his charge as if he had set out in the beginning to effect that unlucky innocence by design. Often too



the tenderness of parental love has a sort of fatuity in keeping from the children the information most necessary to their future success in making a happy home. The father is too generous to let the rough wind blow upon his children; when the rough wind is as necessary to their health of mind as the open air is to the health of the body. They grow up, surrounded by their mistaken affection, as hot-house plants. The moment a serious trouble meets them they wilt and droop before it. The mother toils and slaves herself to keep her girls in elegant idleness and to teach them the most refined and fatal selfishness. The manners of society combine to produce the same effects, which shall, at last, send two young people out on the voyage on the returnless sea of real life, with no proper and sober knowledge of its toils and dangers. It was not without reason that our Bibles contain so many warnings to the rich; that the Oriental hyperbole was so often made to do service in denouncing the woes which follow in the track of those who have wealth enough to develope the futility of the rational plans of the unsanctified understanding. Therefore, as we think of these homes of ours (and who can ask more than has been done for them in material advantages), let us spend a little time in looking at the unpleasant facts which beset them.

David seems to have found his experience of some of these facts to have been very bitter. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, and am dwelling in the

tents of Kedar." Some commentators are shrewd in determining the exact time the king of Israel was in passing trouble in some of his wanderings, and they tell us where the land of Mesech was, and mark a period when the fugitive found a brief refuge in the black tents of the wandering Bedawin. But the probability is that the writer of this Psalm was thinking of no such thing. The explanations all seem to me to fall to the ground. I am glad they do. It seems to me that whoever wrote this psalm, has merely used the names in the usual poetic sense.\* We may use them exactly as he did. For some reason, his home was to him as the heathen habitations and the black tents of the Arabs. There he must dwell. He could not escape from the gloomy evils that haunted him, that sat with him at his daily meals and perched on the posts of his couch at night.

If David was the writer, then it is the uplifting the vail for a moment that covered a gloomy fact, which I firmly believe to have always existed, in the house of the husband of Uriah's widow. Let me briefly refer to that incident. While Uriah was living, Absalom was the heir-expectant of the throne of David by many fair rights, as things went in that rude age. You remember that the prophet had forewarned the sinful king, that his punishment would

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\* "They stand here for remote barbarous hordes. Similarly we should speak (De Wette) of a dwelling with Turks and Hottentots."

*Speaker's Com.*

follow in the line of his sin. It did—in a most gloomy sense, it did.\* But, think of the daily life and thoughts of the young man Absalom in that polygamous household. Talented, witty, energetic, and the warlike idol of the younger men of his tribe, the admired of the women of Israel, nothing would bar his way to the supreme power, but the consequences of the fatal sin of his father. The sin removed his reverence for David; the consequences, excited his daily hatred. The home which contained Absalom and Solomon, could not have been far different from the tents of the wild and revengeful Arabs of Kedar. And how could the wretched king remove it? How could he purify it of the stains of his own guilt? It teemed with the threatenings of fate. It grew darker daily before his sight. The devils of deceit and murderous passions took up their dwelling under his roof, as they had once in his heart, and he must see them working their accursed mission, in spite of him. He may wail, and repent. But the repentance of that

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\*“Thus the subsequent troubles which Ammon, Absalom and Adonijah brought into David’s house—and they were the only ones which temporarily clouded the clear sky in which his star shone—were all of them connected with this fundamental wrong (of polygamy), and on the same thread hung many of the evils which were felt under David’s successors. \* \* \* Absalom was David’s third son (of his second son we never hear anything, and therefore conclude that he was a person of no importance), and moreover his mother was not of plebeian origin, like David’s other wives, but the daughter of the King of Geshur. He was a man of daring character, and inherited from his father nothing but his regal pride.”—*Ewald, Hist. of Israel, Vol. III.* p. 171.

covenant of eternal Law did not mislead him. He must bear the consequences of his deeds. He had made that home for himself: he must dwell in it as it was. I can easily imagine that the *Mesech* and *Kedar* of the text were not necessarily outside the walls of Mount Zion.

Let us turn from him to the homes here. I have more than once, in these discourses, identified the Garden of Eden with the homes of men. I think the Bible is of wonderful beauty; that it admits of this use and application. The young seek, with desperate will, to dwell in that garden, and make that innocence and love a reality. The atmosphere which bewitches them is that of the land of sacred romance, where the lion, for them lies down with the lamb; where the laws of nature soften their accustomed rules in their behalf. At any rate, I sympathize with all the young who do this thing. It is the delusion of innocence, and the innocence is its excuse. But the serpent comes into every garden and his invariable work of evil is now, as it was in the beginning, to plant in one sin; to create a lie in the centre of the paradise which we set up. God alone can intercept the ruin and drive us to repentance, and lead to hopes of a Paradise in the far future, to atone for the loss of this. This sob of David begins with the denunciation of falsehood: "Woe is me!" Because of *the false tongue*. What shall be done to it? "Sharp arrows and hot coals of Juniper." False tongues which are armed with permanent causes of



discord, and unhappy homes, are ever the causes of human misery. Under their malign influences the Eden dries up and becomes the haunt of the satyr and the owl. There is no peace in them, and there is no escape from them. The dream of youth goes out in shame and disgust, and the garden changes gradually into the hated tents of Kedar.

Home must be built on absolute truth, on solid character. I do not mean the surface truth of the tongue. I do not give room to the question, of how much of the soft nothings of outside courtesy to strangers is to be transplanted into the family. I am not thinking of it. Nor do I mean the truth of the tribe of the bears, the silly bluntness of rudesbys, which is often as injurious in its stupidity as it is rough in its application. The coordinate and compensating quality to the truth I am thinking of, is *perfect confidence and entire trustfulness* in a family. This is, I think, the perfect love that casteth out fear, of which the apostle St. John speaks. It finds its way into the Church from the family, and there it is purified and consecrated, and then returned to the family. It is the absolute truth of conduct, which St. Peter, has in mind, when he exhorts wives to trust to win their ungodly husbands, by their "chaste conversation," or manner of life. It is something different from mere truth in words. The latter follows from it. Now, truth of conduct, is the truth of the whole man. It requires the whole man. No part can be left out. If a man is ninety and nine-hundreths of

him in the circle of the fold of salvation, and ripe for Heaven, I beg him to take more care of that last fraction, which is outside, than of all the ninety and nine at home. It were better to have a body all in perfect health, and only a vile, little spot in the integument of the heel, punctured to the quick with the poison of the cobra, than to have a life with one black poison lie in it. Here I could spend an hour in denouncing the abominations of the false professors of religion, in all the degrees up and down, from the pretentious charities of the assemblies to the small, mean deceits of the lowest underling in them. But that some other time. Truth of conduct is the work of life. It is the great work of life. In my judgment, the Almighty has made the covenant signs of the Church as plain as he has, in order to prevent all manner of delay of the conscience on them. He will leave us all our time to consecrating the life, to working down into the deceitful heart and letting the light of His Spirit into its unwholesome gloom. I like the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, as a moral force, because it takes the mystery of questions of sacred privilege altogether out of the way, and leaves the tremendous truth uppermost, that the whole man must be pure as God is pure: true, as God is true, if he would be at peace with and see God. Ask a man, Were you really converted? He may be half his life settling that question. Nine-tenths of the moral perplexities of the denominations around us are centered on the acknowledged difficulties of their

methods of self-examination on that elementary question. But ask him, have you been baptized, and made a member of the contingent covenant, which avails nobody save as they keep it, and the answer is prompt, and the fearful contingency comes uppermost at once. He must be what he professes, or his profession amounts to nothing. And home is the place where he is to work out that problem.

Truth between husband and wife, between parents and children, or to take the other word, *confidence*, must be perfect, or the end, sooner or later, is sorrow, division and hatred. Without this foundation-stone, the house is built on the shifting sand. One has only to take up any evening paper, to see the wrecks which frightfully illustrate the truth of this law. The vulgar pairs who have no better sense or taste than to drag their household troubles into the view of the world, at least show us the diseases, which others with better taste, or less courage, hide and bear in secret sorrow. We are all bound up in the same bundle of life. The diseases of our city air are endemical. No kind of walls will exempt us from our share of them. No wealth can buy exception. Now, the radical evil, the original sin at the bottom of most of these sorrows, is want of truth. I do not speak now of that great falsehood and wrong, which destroys the tie and bond of the family altogether, but only of those lesser lies, which prevent the confidence, which is necessary to happiness. God has so constituted us, that this confidence is as necessary to

the success of the family, as the very vital heat which keeps them in health. The want of it is the beginning of misconception and wrong judgments. It is all well enough for a man to quote the proverb, 'about the choice between dwelling upon the house-top, and with a contentious woman;' but the wrong is quite as often with the man as with the woman. On the woman comes usually the burden of the trouble of the family. The duty of the husband is that of the nobler sort, to anticipate this law and burden, and resolutely to take his share of it. If he is false, if the mutual ardor of the innocent days of the lovers degenerates into selfish and careless thought for himself alone, then the whole course of life is disarranged at once. The best that can be hoped for the two, is, that they will settle down each into his or her way of fretful indifference, and leave the other alone, for the most part. They find, as Eve did with her Eden, that the serpent has robbed their garden of its light and beauty, and given them only the wilderness in its place. The evil is that this state of things is itself a lie.

*Eden* is written on the outside of the flag which waves in the wind: within, it is *Mesech* and *Kedar*. It is a degrading sham. It is the very denial of the wedded love which the union symbolizes. The two are in a yoke, which means unity of purpose. They have none, and they must pretend to have it. The pretence is pregnant with evil. It invites deceit. It teaches a false mode of bearing the troubles of life.



Their very virtues become hollow—their religion is a mere tinsel. The burdens which mutual sympathy could lighten for each other, which love would transmute into the means of grace to each other, by inciting the will and rousing the nobler soul to accept them with the enthusiasm of faith, are left in all their coarseness and unrelieved weight. They are left dull, monotonous and hateful. No man can live without the help of the imagination. It mingles in every day's doings. It is the "walking by the Spirit." It sweetens toil with dreams, which, whether they ever come true or not, are the strength and solace of the passing hour. You prove this in everything. It is the incitement of all good men. Take two gamblers, who have been married under false pretences. Is there any more gloomy picture of wretchedness than they present when they are found out by each other? The light of the little esteem in which they had seen each other has gone out. They are like the shabby stage of the theatre after the play is over. The glamour is gone. What is left is hateful and mean. So are the homes that are built on any of the lies of the wicked world. The people in them are like actors, and the acting is poor, and it does not pay. They are afraid of the hisses of the audience, and they see the audience tired of them.

How many of us there may be, who dwell in the streets of Vanity Fair; in the tents of Kedar; who is to tell. It would be almost as dangerous to

number them, as it was for David to take the census of the tribes of Israel. The satirist dips his pen in the gall of bitterness, as he sneers at the vanity of society, the falsehoods which pass current, the washed gold and counterfeits of the public market. It is not my duty, even to fancy how many such unhappy people may be found in any given ward. I speak to those whom I suppose to believe, that the search for good is not to be lightly given up, and that the truth can make men free from the chains of the devil. The root-evil of home troubles is not, as it is often claimed by the sentimental, the want of that airy and mystical love of Damon and Dora, for which the fates are responsible; but the want of that radical truth and homespun honesty, which is spun often in tears, in the loom of common interests and mutual confidence, and which lasts long after the bridal dress has turned yellow with age. I for one believe, that the ordinary experience of the vast army of the saints, who reach the higher shore, is much the same. Abraham, in his way, began it for them. The time came to him when his Isaac antagonized his Ishmael; and the saint required the confession of the inconsistencies of the sinner. And they mostly find his footsteps placed before them. As he saw the light of early hope sinking in the dusty clouds of the deserts in which he always wandered, and at last saw in this continual remove the lesson of his earthly disappointment, the supernal light of heaven slowly taking the place of the Eden which he had

lost here; so has it always been, and will be to the end. The truth of character is the only sound basis of any religious faith.

I always find myself looking beneath what men think that they believe, to what their life-marks of face tell that they really are believing. Would that I could impart, by any words of mine, the conviction, that there is no escape from misery for those who do not believe and practice the truth of character, on which the home of this world is to be built, and that of the other inherited. Burn the false tongue on coals of juniper. If David had been an American, he would have said, of resinous pine. As it is, he is in favor of the hottest fire that was known to him. But at any cost, let the house be founded in truth; in unpleasant truth, if need be. At all events, never, in any case, believe that any specious hidden lie is ever better than the truth. The rivulets which make the pool of the Church must be clear, if the pool is to reflect heaven to your eyes. False styles of living; expenses that you have no right to incur, excesses in the very largesses of charity, excesses of hospitality; the vanity of admiration for generous public-spirit; they are all alike, the very baits of the devil, if they tempt a man to infuse into his daily life, that which will sooner or later become a lie. I can recall a shock which I once received as a youth in the days of the simple faith that all things are what they seem; in wondering at the wealth of a chance host and dreaming wild dreams of his

happiness; and the next day, learning that he did not dare to go beyond his door-step, for fear of his creditors. How mean did it all seem, the moment the faith in him died out. And it is mean and shabby; this poor pretence to culture and art and piety; this loud profession of a peace that passes understanding, when there is no peace to the wicked. Come out of Mesech. Flee away from Kedar. Deny the devil, hid in the soft silks and laces of fashion, and he will flee from you. Whether you join a church or not, be true to each other, as you have souls to be saved by truth alone. Of course I believe in the Church; I believe in using a ladder, when I wish to climb. But I do not expect the ladder to make me any other man than I am, when I begin to climb. Dr. South said, that no man ever went to heaven whose heart was not there before. I vary it for the moment, that no man ever goes to heaven, who has not found it in his heart and home, before he gets there. The Church is the interlinking of all our homes, the reminder of the gentle charities in which they all exist; but the homes themselves must be pure, or the linking them together does no good. If your troubles of life are very heavy, if the brightness of the sunshine has passed by, and you are in the shadow, and the whole world is becoming coarse and mean; if you find the heart answering, "Woe is me, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar;" look to it, my brother, if the blame be not your own. The true sign of repentance, in my judgment, is



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always the willingness to take up the blame of one's own deeds. David was half forgiven, when he began to say, 'Against thee only have I sinned.' There is no need in all the universe of the Almighty for the misanthrope, or the maudlin. They are not altogether sane in their despair. There are evils which we cannot cure; but there are none that we cannot confess to ourselves and set us right manfully to endure. Grant that the bower of earthly bliss has been in many things a mistake. You are not the all-peaceful man, ruling successfully the destinies of those belonging to you. You have a skeleton in the house; and it will walk at night, and show to you the proofs of your follies and sins. Well! rise and meet it: talk to it: face it in the belief, that there is a God, and a heaven worth trusting to. The one great battle of life, I tell you truly, is the fight of faith in the truth. You must fight it, not at the stake, with the glamour of a Catholic Church, shining like an aureole about your head. But you and I must lay down the scheme of the campaign in our homes, and labor there till we drive the foul spirits of lies out of them. Grant that you have erred; that you yourself began the evil course which has educated an Absalom in your own house. Grant that the falsehoods of the world have become entrenched in the recesses of your family. It has made you a tyrant, instead of a loving man. It has made your wife a renegade and a sneak, instead of a lovely messenger of truth to you. It has raised the

children to be anything rather than olive branches round about your table. They have learned deceits by inheritance. They wrangle and backbite each other. Talk of religion—it's all you can expect, to bear up with your sorrows and not curse God and die. You can echo the text to the syllable: "Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell as I do and where I am." Grant all this, and intensify it as you will; what then? If you are bankrupt in business, you change the whole manner of your life down to the foundation. You begin again, from the beginning, and renew your toil in order to live. And is there any bankruptcy like this, that the one great gift of God has turned to dust in your keeping? Yet on this critical point turns the question of your manhood, yea, in due course, of your salvation. Here is the grand field of the true conversion.

Here Jacob, as I read his story, takes the scene from the father of the faithful. That night, when the terrible news reached him, that Esau and four hundred wild Arabs were on their way to meet him, quite too many for a fraternal greeting, he sent up his wail of "Woe is me, my sins are at last finding me out." But he would not fly from the meeting, and God met him, and contended with him in the long dark hours of his agony, and gave him his title of *Israel*, a Prince of God, in honor of his daring to go on and face the consequences of his misdeeds; but left him a cripple for life, that he and we should never forget that repentance is never to be compared with innocence.

If you must limp with Jacob ; if you must bear a secret sorrow to the grave, do it and fear not. There is another world to explain the troubles of this one. There must be another home somewhere, to justify repentance here. Jacob, you remember, called the place where he halted on his thigh ; that is, where he began to go as a cripple, towards the fierce hordes of Esau, *Penuel*, for there " He had seen God face to face, and his life was preserved." Believe it, it is just here that the compassions of the infinite Father fail not. For David, as he mused on the matter of Uriah, and its fatal influence on Ammon and Absalom, and through them on his home : for you, if your thoughts run in the same line and your repentings are kindled within you ; for us all, as we cogitate these great problems of life, these words of the poet may convey a true lesson. They are worth remembering :

" From age to age descends unchecked  
The sad bequest of sire to son,  
The body's taint, the mind's defect,  
Through every web of life the dark threads run.

" Oh why and whither?—God knows all :  
I only know that He is good,  
And that whatsoever may befall,  
Or here or there, must be the best that could."

## VIII.

### HOME-RELIGION.

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*"Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice with the wife of thy youth."*—PROVERBS V. 15-18.

UCH texts as this seem to strike on the common ear as somehow foreign to the Christian sentiment. We give them up as belonging to the blindness of Judaism; the selfishness of the unregenerate or half regenerate heart; as things at which God winked, because of the necessary infirmities of men. In other words, there is a jar in our common conception, between the Old Testament wisdom and that of the New. If it is a real discrepancy, we must accept it, and make the best of it. But is it so? I feel that the dissonance is not in the Bible, but in ourselves: and as I propose now to use this conservative wisdom as the right lesson to be taught Christians, as it was once the proper thing



for Jews, I call your attention, for a moment, to some facts about Christianity, that bear on this subject.

Christianity, for fifteen and a half centuries, was molded almost entirely by bachelors and celibates. An ideal home, as a religious thing, which should be worthy of the ambition of godly people, and which should give opportunity for the culture of the highest graces of the perfect Christian character, was unknown. The great body of early Christian literature looks the other way. Celibacy was the ideal perfection. We are affected by this fact, far more than we are apt to imagine.

I. The apostles were men so persecuted, that the advice of the wanderer Paul, that all who could should remain in the single state, was, for the time, the dictate of common sense and true kindness. When men were dragged to the most cruel forms of death, without reason or law, by mobs or by tyrants, it was well that they should have as few dependants to lament them as possible. A man who might at any time be killed, and had the greatest number of chances that he would be in a year or so, would find all the kind and true dictates of his heart prompting him to keep himself as disentangled as possible from the ties of nature. There was one thing more, to which I can only allude, and pass it. The homes of men, in that age, had become so utterly polluted by sensuality and fraud, that their very religion was foul with the black stains of the prevailing corruption. Alongside of the sensual *ayesha* of India to-day, you

find the ascetic dervish ; alongside the disreputable looseness of European society, in Catholic countries, you have the convent and the monk. There is a social reaction which regulates these things, that is as fixed as the laws of nature. The early enthusiasts in the Church found no escape from the pollution that was in the world through lust, except in the loneliness of the convent and the cave of the hermit.

II. Therefore, when the pagan persecutions ceased, at the early part of the fourth century, the error was intrenched in the citadel of the dogmatic life of the Church. The life of home was secular. *The religious*, by a proud, unhappy distinction, were the monks and hermits. There were two temptations existing in the Church, which helped to continue this state of things. One was that the priests of the spiritual faith needed the sacred awe, which, from the beginning of history, belonged to the sacerdotal character. It, and it alone, could impress the rude crowd of semi-barbarians or whole savages, with respect, and command their obedience. The other was the fact that as the first duties of those ages were to spread abroad, as rapidly as possible, the benign influences of the faith among uncivilized nations, it was evident that the missionaries, whether alone, or as in the case in England, in colonies, could move more rapidly and influence others more effectually as single men than when they might be impeded with families. It was with them then as it is now with the garrison of a remote post among

wild Indians. What was in the mouth of St. Paul the dictate of common sense, afterwards came to be thought the inspired law of the heroic Church.

III. Then, again, in the dark ages it became the fixed and unchangeable custom. It is foolish in us now to ignore the fact, that the medieval Church did do a great work in the dark ages. She did it probably as well as the circumstances allowed. But she did it with the loss of home virtues. She did it with some partial perversions of the Christian life. Her scheme tumbled the edifice on her own head. The epoch of her punishment was marked when the cry came up from almost all Christendom, for the suppression of the convents and monasteries. The Reformation was an assertion of the necessity of something better than the monastery afforded. The marriage of Luther to a nun, was the logic of the age. It committed the new movement to the faith, that there can be no higher life than the 'secular,' at which men had been taught to sneer.

The necessities of the times perpetuated some of the influences of this evil notion of the dark ages. Dogmatic theology required the existence among protestants of a large body of learned men, to defend the positions of the reformers. These scholars were generally poor. The advantages of the universities were obtained by them, only by that studious life of the bookworm, which made the home life rather an obstruction than a help. They either did not marry, or often carried into the estate less knowledge

of the duties of it, than of Greek particles. So then, in the face of these facts, I say again, the Christianity which we have received, may give us something of a discord, in the two tones of the old and the new covenants, and still the covenants themselves may be in unison. The conservatism of the heart is holier and better than the scholasticism of papist or protestant. The jealous guardianship of its secret life is essential to the best interests of true religion.

It is this truth which has been covered over, in the long history of Christianity. We now by habit look at the duties, and pleasures, and teachings of home as those of 'the old Adam.' The true, religious person is still supposed to be the one living in the absorption of public duties. Societies, crusades, missions, committees for this and that object, these are religious: the things which make a man or a woman better and more dutiful in life, these are either left to the chance enthusiasm of individuals, or they vegetate as they may, uncheered by the teachers of religion.

The text seems to be selfish. Those words in it: *thine own cistern; thine own well*; and the precept, let them be thine own: How, it may be asked, are they compatible with the universal charity of the Gospel? How can we love others as ourself, and withhold anything from them? Is not charity the bond of all the virtues? Is not this precept the deadness of the old law? I think not. I believe that it is time for men to consider some of the old wisdom as quite equal to the unauthorized inferences of theo-



rists of the new, even if they seem venerable from age. There is a zeal without knowledge. There is a piety run mad. There is nothing in the gospel which conflicts with one's *duty to himself*, or in any way crosses the wisdom of the inspired precept: "Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, as rivers of waters in the streets, and let them be only thine own, and not a stranger's with thee." To keep their water pure for the refreshment of others, let the spring-head be walled around and covered over from rough intruders. Then guard it strictly from the approaches of all manner of cattle. The contrary course is as foolish in matters of character, as it is in the natural economy.

I. I assert then, that home is a sacred institution, not to be lightly surrendered. I carry my thought now so far, that I do not except boarding-schools. It is not a matter of equal balance, in a parent's mind, whether a boy or girl shall be put in another set of circumstances than his home in which he was born. Before any one may think that I am about to offend their prejudices, let me say, that I have a right to speak, in this matter, from experience. I believe that in my own case, my parents thought that they were doing the best thing for me. I rather suspect they did do the best thing. I do not blame their memory, that I was sent from home for education. Shielded by this confession, I hope I may say what I think on this subject, without unnecessary sensitiveness on the part of any hearer. There are often, I know, good

reasons why a child should go from home. And boarding-schools are varied in their excellence. They are not quite conventual in their discipline. But all that does not take away from the truth, that generally and normally the first and best place for a boy or girl, but certainly for a girl, is the home of her birth. If there were no other objection to them and to all other institutions which form collections of men and women, in large bodies, for anything except for punishment, it would weigh with me, that it is an assumption of a false theory of what makes the real education and produces the best character. I suppose that a college is a necessity: that the best teacher of the sciences and arts will be found by many away from their own abodes; and that the results of any theory on the subject, will come round at last practically to the same point. But pardon me for reminding you, that I am not speaking for a class. The majority of children do not go to college, and do not receive the hot-house culture of the popular boarding-school. Here comes in the stupid error. We think of them as the unhappy ones; we rank them as non-producers of the social virtues. They are only the workers, the farmers, the mechanics, the nobodies. They are, of course, always behind the professionals in all things, especially in religion. Your boy, for example, who has been to college and graduated from the seminary, comes home, at last, the interesting and—heaven save the mark!—the *learned* divine. He steps out of his temporary

monkhood, in College and Seminary, with the odor of traditional sanctity about him. Pause and listen if he speaks. He stands before his former companions, little less than "Solomon in all his glory," and infinitely beyond him in wisdom. The boy who has been toiling all the while in the shop or on the farm, and whose heart has been mellowed by the constant common sunshine of household virtues and trials, hides his modest head, for the time. The young divine has picked up very little real knowledge of life. He has been all the time, as it were, in the parlors of people. He has seen only the boarding-house side of the times. No one has been so rude as to rub him to the quick, and cool down his self-esteem, as children do in all well-regulated families. No one has been so kind as 'to take him down' at times from his highness, and say to him kindly, but in tones that are better than the enthymemes of logic: "My boy, you are growing up with an inordinate self-consciousness. Your comfortable seclusion, your studies, your habits of morality, your inoffensiveness, the few hard knocks that you receive as you get on, all are allowing you to fancy that you are the very pink of perfection, a very Caiaphas, without spot or reproach. The good that is in you is in danger of being overgrown with a scurf of pious self-esteem, by the very excellences of your nature." His home would have done this for him, in most cases.

May I confess, in this matter. The last year that I was in college, my father became dangerously sick,

and I was summoned home, to be ready to take his place if he had died. I had been then seven years in the monkish cells of boarding-school and college. I had become used to it. I despised anything else. The change to home, where I was only one of a dozen; with no more rights than the rest, and open to the thousand little jars and light arrows of the household infantry, set me, for a while, half wild. Yet it was an average household, I found, in after life, when I had exchanged the student's world for the real one. Something of the same experience is probably felt by all who have passed along the same path. And much of the unreality in the discourses of young divines, those gentle, pale anemones and wind-flowers of an early spring, is due to the fact, that after they have piled up the knowledge of their profession in their brains, it takes some time to put most of it out again, and begin to learn of men and women, who are not yet on the roll of the canonized saints, and do not affect much the pale and leaden-eyed scholars of past days. Books tell him of the past. He has then to learn, (and it does not always come easy,) that the world moves on always and the Church must move with it; that the last observation of the shrewdest divine of his sect, told only what was true at the time it was taken, not what would be always as necessary. He has to do some of the thinking for his own time.

Most of us, too, can give a sad story of the wrecks of the new-life which happen in school days. I



cannot say much; but there are things which could be said, which would abundantly establish the argument, that home is a sacred institution, not to be lightly surrendered. Dark clouds hang on this horizon. The virtue which needed and would have adorned home-circles, how often has it proved too weak for the hot air of the school-room, where the bone of the study has been the writings of the pagans; where a precocious knowledge has paved the way to temptation. You parents complain of the temptations of the real world. I tell you, that the world of old was infinitely worse. The boy who has been the companion of the best and gentlest influences, suddenly finds himself at school, in a boarding-house with others; say twenty of them good boys, and two bad ones. The old moan of 'one sinner destroying much good,' is kept up from all our boarding-school life. His home affections are kept in abeyance. He is one of a school list. He is only an average. If he is regular and *convenient* in his habits, if he has his tasks in order, and does nothing to give trouble, the parental care, which such places promise, and seldom fulfil, is satisfied. He longs for sympathy. He had it at home, and did not know that he needed it. He is open to good influences, no doubt, but he is also open to bad. The father's eye at his home kept a look out for this, and jealous care of the mother anticipated the dangers before him. No one else can do this for him. Certainly no one else will. I know enough of the rules of

human nature, in all collections of people. It is the same. Now and then the saint arises to take care to always love and think for the weak, and to delight in loving the disagreeable and inconvenient. But it is rare. The rule is the other way. Many a restless boy, whose fault lies in an inward steam, that no amount of repressing can break to parlor quietudes, has been driven to accept the decree of the careless tutors and governors about him, that he was bad, when he was not bad at all. He was inconvenient. He was too healthy; made red blood too fast, to keep quiet in anything less than a twenty-acre lot. He finds in his new abode, that he is best out of the way of his elders. They endure him, by a plentiful use of the tonic of 'don't.' He soon assumes a character, which is apt to remain with him for life. The trouble is that he had no call to do this, save in his father's home, and with the experience of the elder to help him. But if your boy is alone, you must not complain of him if he learns to stand on his own feet, among boys. He cannot depend on you. The vital questions of life, you are not near to answer. He is precocious, by necessity. He is 'up to a thing or two,' as much as any man of thirty. He is acquainted with the ways of the multitude. He is keen, or thinks that he is. He cuts his eye teeth, after the first year at school. He then begins to sow his wild oats, before he has conquered his love of candy.

Now I am misanthropical enough to believe that

this set of faults are the characteristics of the community; that they have poisoned our very ideas of God and His religion. Assembly virtues, ecclesiastical graces, talk-qualities, pious exhortations, eloquent remarks in form of prayers have taken the place of the real solid things of character. The Boston hypocrite and defaulter the other day had only the excess of the qualities which show a stain in the social rivulets on every side of us. Our boy, in the school, has the temptations of which I have spoken, and then added to it all the classical studies, which certainly inform the mind of much of human depravity, whatever they do for the heart. He follows Eneas to Carthage, and smacks the 'Bowery' wit of Horace, and learns the complex idioms of language, and many other things. Is it strange, that the four years of college are unlike any others in a man's life? That the college sense of honor is a thing to itself, which no faculty has ever been able to sound or guide? That the dissipations of college are destructive and fatal? And yet, and here is the point that I make, we so unite to exaggerate the superiority of mental cultivation over moral purity: of mind over character, that we are compelled to tolerate life-long evils in all the ramifications of society. I am not disposed to condemn schools or colleges, or to run a tilt at the prerogatives or class privileges of professional men. But I lament the failing power of *the sturdy independence of the unlearned body of society*. In the old world, the

titled aristocracy is a fixed barrier to the assumptions of the learned classes. It is a good thing. Only there is a better. There are always a large and influential body of men, in England, whose interests are on the side of the work-day world. They are exempt from the necessity of making a fortune. They accept education as a subordinate thing, not the first or the highest thing. They inherit the instinct to defend the virtues of home. They believe in honor as a safeguard to their inherited advantages, and frown down the guerillas, the talkers, the lecturers and reformers, who, under specious pretexts, are making war on things settled and approved, under the pretences of a superior knowledge. I have amused myself, lately, in this connection, in asking men of common virtues, "Which do you esteem most, *mind* or *character*?" The first answer is certain to be confused. The tone of our ordinary habit, is to answer for mind. It is the second thought, which suggests the true reply. *The talker* is conscious of his rank in American society, before *the doer*. As a professional man myself, of course I do not sigh for the good old days of Queen Bess, when the clergyman was allowed to take his seat below the salt, and on getting a parish, to aspire to the hand of the maid servant, if he wished to marry. But I doubt if there were not some rare advantages in that state of things for the masses. Between the supremacy of mind and of heart, I cannot for a moment hesitate in the preference. Out of the heart



are still the issues of life. Intellect, I do not say unsanctified, but only unmodified by influences from the working-world of real men, is simply an abuse; all the worse for being a holy abuse. The aristocracy of mind is as fatal as that of wealth. The clergy are a poor substitute for the nobility of the landed proprietors, in the regeneration of social morals. Their conventual education, so far as it prevails over their home education, is an evil which the great object of their preaching is hardly able to overcome. The weakness of human nature will impair the sublimity of their one theme of thought. They were never intended by the commission of Christ to accomplish this end. They do it most imperfectly. They are men only. Their manhood is defective in some of its chief characters, by the very seclusion of their early life. They, like the prophets, can denounce the evils of corruption in the common walks of life, but a society ruled or largely moulded by them alone, will be in the rear of the progress of the world. It has always been so. It is so now.

There is too much of unreality in the workings of our Church systems. We are perpetuating the obsolete maxims of the ages of history. The reforms of evils, the actual abolition of existing wrongs, are too much left to the outside world. The preacher has too often degenerated into the finished scholar and the subtle rhetorician. We are too often reminded by them of the orator *Tertullus*, whose

eloquence won his fee, at the expense of the truth. It is easy to see that the pulpit is becoming weak to assert itself, in the great reforms of the day. Men are becoming Quakers in a practical way. They instinctively look to the reformer who speaks from the workman's bench, and points his argument with something of skeptical unbelief.

In conclusion, let me compare the three modes of thought of the Church, which will explain my position.

I. There is the dogma of a sacerdotal class. This is medieval, and its representative is the Roman Church. In this theory, the Church is the clergy. They are the sovereigns of the race. In their hands are deposited the great sacraments of salvation. They only can make friends with the Creator. They stand between men and God. They hold the keys which unlock the gates of the kingdom of heaven. In this theory the element of piety is faith in them and *in their ways of work*. For evident reasons they are celibates. They are a body in close corporation, which looks to its own vitality alone, for the preservation of the kingdom of God. Religion is stamped with their impress. No shekel can pass current, until it is impressed by them with the seal of the sanctuary. There is too much of this effete tendency in our own Church. Men call it Romanism, and its advocates repudiate the charge, on the ground of their rejection of the claims of the pope. But it is the old fable over again, of the fox who was invited

to enter the lion's den. The steps all point one way. *Nulla vestigia retrorsa*. They may not wish to see any one of the old errors of the Roman Church reproduced in precise form. What they do aim at is the continuation of a *caste of priests*, and the powers of a professional proprietary.

II. With others the Church is the company of believers in dogmas. Men are selected by and as individuals. Piety is the intellectual process of grown men, who first think out for themselves all the processes of the faith of certain doctrines, and then league together for certain purposes. In this society, or these Protestant societies, the supremacy of intellect is the one antidote for all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. Religion is addressed to each man alone. It all lies between him and his Creator. This is the Congregational form of religious society. It has been tried for three hundred years, and I mean no injury to any good brother, if I say, that I think it is being tried in the balances and found wanting. It is supple to adapt itself to the changes of society, but its proud boast of facility to do so is its ruin. It loses credit, for want of some determining principle in times of trial. It is a net which can hold the small fish, but it fails at the strain with the strong ones. The Unitarians formerly demonstrated, and others are demonstrating that it is a rope of sand. The individuals come together and they do not cohere. There is a radical defect in

its views of life. It loses year by year the sympathy of earnest men.

III. The true theory of the Church is, in my judgment, the Church which can take men into its fold, as members of homes; that Church, which is not the preserve of any one privileged class; not the aggregate of a series of adult professors, who agree to be bound by compact, but a collection of homes, in which the supremacy of home is the groundwork of everything that is recognized in its doctrines. It begins with the beginning of life, and as far as it asserts the original sin of man, coördinates with it the mercy of Christ. It makes the first authority to be that of the parent, and promotes it with the supplement of the friends of the family. It consecrates all the life from eight days old and under, by the doctrines of its font of salvation. It creates no claim to honor, save in character as the highest consideration. Is a man twenty times a professor of all the pieties. It asks: What are his works? Has he been baptized by the whole House of Bishops? What is his character? Has he been converted by astounding proofs on the very road to Damascus? What does it do for him, at his desk, in the market, in his household? It may be asked sneeringly, do I pretend that the Episcopal Church answers this description? I reply, If you look at her formulas of ecclesiastical working, she at least aims at it. She does call on her children, from one end of the Prayer-book to the other, as members of households,



consecrated by her prayers and bound to her by the catechism and the liturgy, in that original relation. This is your Church, by the act, first of all, of your parents. It is dear to you because it holds every one of your children just as strongly as it holds you. Like a good ship, it takes into it, for the voyage across the ocean of this life, old men and maidens, young men and children alike. It takes in a given community as a collection of homes, rather than as individuals, and keeps before all alike the terms of the contract, as contingent on character, not on privilege. It repudiates the class-idea of any lords over God's heritage, be that claim either the unspoken sanctity of the monk, or the eloquent sanctity of the dogmatic preacher. The virtues of the family are the virtues of the Church. The piety of the catechism is the piety of 'duty to God and duty to man.' May the Father who is known as ours, in proportion as we realize that manner of love, grant us grace to perceive and value this blessing ; and make our Church system a reality and a praise in the land, for His glory and our salvation. Thus then, I claim that the text is as true to the Christian as ever it was to the Israelite : he too, is to learn the virtues of life and the graces of piety, by guarding the privacy of his own home. He is allowed to love his neighbor as himself, by first learning to make himself worth loving, and by loving his wife and children better. He is to be a good Churchman, by being first a good man, a good father and husband.

After the strictest model of the wisest of men, he keeps the fountain of the rivulets in the streets pure, that they may refresh other men. He can enter into the spirit of the precept—“*Let them be thine own, and not strangers with thee*’ Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice with the wife of thy youth: the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.”

## IX.

### HUSBANDS AND FATHERS.

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*“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life ; that your prayers be not hindered.”*—I PETER iii. 7.



THE word *weaker* here is confined to the physical weakness of the female sex. It has no association with the sneering sense, in which it is sometimes used by vulgar persons. Prerogative and reason do not lie in muscle. It far oftener reverses the matter. Minerva oftener excels in the struggle of brute force with Hercules. If he only keeps his hands off, she leaves the brawny giant the writhing victim of her arrows. It is well to notice this distinction. The apostle St. Peter is not a man of many soft words. He stands before us as a very plain speaker. He it is, that makes the appeal to one's manhood, when he bids Christian husbands to dwell with their wives, as physically stronger ; as it were to warn them, by all that makes them Christians, to avoid the rudeness of

brutes and heathens. He leaves the question of relative intellect and of relative right in their different stations, as they arise, where it ought to be left, to the decisions of love and a sound mind. The text is perverted when it is used in any other sense. It is simply absurd to debate by it the popular question of the age, as to the superiority of one sex over the other. The intellect of the wife may far outstrip the dull and sordid motions of the husband. It often does. The woman who is compelled to acknowledge the fact that her lord is a fool or a brute, in my way of looking at it, instead of crying out for our sympathy, ought to go into the gloomiest wood, where the damp chills of the malarious fogs make a home for toads and newts, and at midnight ask of the witch Hecate, how it came to pass—how she was such a fool, as to link herself to a Caliban; whether it was money or worse that bought her. The absurdities and perversions of a few silly women of both sexes, have provoked in the public mind too much sensitiveness as to this question. The man is the head of the woman. He was before the Church was ever heard of. He will be, if the knowledge of the Bible should ever be forgotten, or be universally established. He has the right of physical force; and as long as he is imperfect, he will abuse it. He has the rights of immunity from her needs and pains; he has not her yearnings for sympathy; his cuticle is tougher. He has not her tendency to self-sacrifice, her passionateness and mobility; and until he is so near



a saint, as to act always by reason, and the exact rules of unselfish justice to all beings, he will unquestionably be often what they call a tyrant. As long as she is not a saint, acting by the sublimities of an infallible passion for the eternal beauty and the absolute goodness, she will be the fit companion for him. Her emancipation will be declared, when the two are fully pervaded and sanctified by the spirit of Christ, as St. Paul indicated, when in one of those inspired arguments, that touch the heart of a thing, he involved the whole subject in a few precepts, which all can see; which here and there some do see. I honor the old rugged St. Peter. He was a hard-headed old man; but there was the generosity of a noble soul in him. In both the instances in which he alludes to this subject, he shows the same feeling of manly tenderness for the weakness of woman. And though this question is not the one that I wish to speak on now, it seems impossible to go on till I have put out of the way, or allayed in some degree this sensitiveness. I therefore quote in this connection passages from two writers, a man and a woman, both of repute. *Jeremy Taylor*, in his famous sermon of *The Marriage Ring*, in speaking of the obligation of a wife to proportion out her duty to her husband, says: "The first duty is obedience; which, because it is nowhere enjoined that the man should exact of her, but often commanded her to pay, gives demonstration that it is a voluntary cession that is required; such a

cession as must be without coercion and violence on his part, but on fair inducements and reasonableness in the thing, and out of love and honor on her part." There is great force in the fact here mentioned, that the husband is nowhere commanded to enforce obedience. While it allows him his rights, it breaks the rod that he had been holding before as a heathen man. Again he says, "It seems to be with husbands as it is with bishops and priests, to whom much honor is due; but yet so that if they stand on it, and challenge it, they become less honorable: and as amongst men and women humility is the way to be preferred; so is it in husbands, they shall prevail by cession, by sweetness and counsel, and charity and compliance." "Indeed there is scarce any matter of duty, but it concerns both alike, and is only distinguished by names, and hath its variety by circumstances and little accidents: and what in one is called 'love,' in the other is called 'reverence;' and what in the wife is 'obedience,' the same in the man is 'duty.' He provides, and she dispenses; he gives commandments, and she rules by them; he rules her by authority, and she rules him by love; she ought by all means to please him, and he must by no means displease her. For as the heart is set in the midst of the body, though it strikes to one side by the prerogative of nature, yet those throbs and constant motions are felt on the other side also, and the influence is equal to both; so is it in conjugal duties: some motions are to the one side more

than to the other, but the interest is on both, and the duty is equal in the several instances."

The other quotation is from the pen of a living woman: probably as well acquainted as any one, with the general sentiment of her sex. She represents a good man, who had been called on to give up something which he earnestly desired, as saying, in explanation of his action: "I would not have been worthy of that relation if I had not felt in my heart the true love of a husband as set forth in the New Testament;—'who should love his wife even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it;' and in case any peril or danger threatened this dear soul, and I could not give myself for her, I had never been worthy the honor she has done me. For, I take it, wherever there is a true cross or burden to be borne by one or the other, that the man who is made in the image of God, as to strength and endurance, should take it upon himself and not lay it upon her that is weaker: for he is therefore strong, not that he may tyrannize over the weak, but bear their burdens for them, even as Christ for his Church.\*

It seems to me, that a calm consideration of these two statements, may allay any sensitiveness on the subject of the proper place and duty of the man in the household. He is the natural head of it. It is *his* home. He is the originator of it. If he is a true man he will be the head of it by merit: if a bad one,

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\* See "The Minister's Wooing."

by force. The very suggestion of rebellion and reserved rights of secession in the States of this union, has done more to destroy the chivalry of the male sex in this country, than all the male vices put together. There is an instinct in regard to this, which you may call brute instinct, if you will, but it is there, which rouses the best and the worst in men, to extirpate rebellion, when it offers to strike at the world-old regimen of the family. Your ferry boat, my fair friends, may be in a fog of theories, but it is not the way out of the fog to tear it to pieces and trust to the separate planks of it. There are evils which we may all contend against, but it is the saddest of all reforms which can hope for good in unbelief of the revelation of God, to which women owe, to-day, their advancement.

With these preliminaries, I advance the opinion, that the original idea of a fully developed man is one in the circle of a home. I am not bound, by the way I put it, to compare married and single life. I only look at man as he stands in the great family of nature. He is put there in three relations, as son, as husband, and as father. I am to speak of his duties in these relations. I leave the first condition to some other evening. It is natural to begin where the scripture began with these relations; that is with the husband. We find him first in Eden, as the one whom in pity God took care should not be alone. Novels and all manner of romances and poetry in this age leave the sexes at the gate of Eden, at the beginning of mar-



ried life, as if it were the end-all of real life. It is the beginning of real heart-life. Your Eden is possible, as duty is then begun, on a higher scale. Of course there are duties and heart-life before. No one doubts it. But there is one fact, which no one will mistake. A man is then put under bonds to society. A boy can leave his Father's home and wander to the end of the world, and violate no fixed law of society. His sense of duty is limited by the sense of partial irresponsibility to any fixed time and place.

As a young man, my chiefest pleasure was sailing in the wildest winds; and never with a sensation of fear. I find now, that I carry a wife and children with me into a boat, and the pleasure is all gone if the wind is high. So I fancy most young men now, perhaps always, have this Arab sensation of restlessness and independence, by nature. If they are dutiful in society, it is with the conviction, that at any time they can fold up their tents and steal away, at a moment's notice. If others depend on them, they can send them money. If society claims them, they can either disregard it, or can satisfy themselves with promises to return on call. If home becomes unpleasant, like Jacob, they can go forth alone, and find some land of Ur, where the sheep of Laban are needing their care, and possibly some Rachel waiting to reward their fidelity. But there is every difference between Jacob crossing the brook Jabbok, alone, with his staff in his hand and nothing

else, and the same man returning to the stream, with these two bands, and Esau coming to meet him. In the one case he was young, lithe, mobile, inexperienced, and as cunning and apt at concealment as a young leopard. Esau might have come against him alone, with ten thousand men, and been laughed at for his pains. In the other his courage departed from him. His heart had run out into so many channels; was seen to be divided up between so many weak women and helpless children, and so many flocks and herds to keep them alive, that he had nothing to do but to hide, and cry to the Lord to help him. I am afraid that no man can pray to God for his help, with all-prevailing force, until he has somebody depending on him. This world is so arranged in mercy that a young man can be imagined who never fears danger. He has a glorious scorn of it. He won't believe in it. He is constantly filling up the picture of the wise man that 'the fool is led like an ox to the slaughter,' because he will not accept his experience at second-hand. He is *teres* and *rotundus*; he is bound to roll right, somehow. If he dies by some accident, well, who is left to weep for him? He is gone, and that is the end of it. So he enjoys life while it lasts, and who is the worse? I am of opinion that the argument which has been pointed at the Church of Rome, because of her celibate priests, is a good one; that they can never be the safe guides of society, because they lack the ties of home-life, and are so defective

in that regard as to be always ready for rebellion against the state.

Now, religion is the sum of experience. I mean the solid experience of the whole man; all his faculties, his reason, his heart, his associations. The man who has only himself to think of, has need of something else to stir him to any very deep thought or feeling. He is apt to find himself like a stranger travelling in a country which is at war. He takes good care to keep out of the way of the enemy's bullets, and holds him ready to flee at an hour's notice. He has no bonds to keep him in one place, in such a land, and he can have only a dim idea of the sterner duties of the citizens who cannot and will not desert the land of their nativity. They do escape many evils of too much sympathy; and with it they lose some of the advantages of real life. The world has tried the selfish life over and over again, and declared it wanting. The religion of Christ has failed to impress a man, if it does not teach him that the real life is one of action for the good of the whole, of self-denial in assuming the wants of the weaker, of self-forgetfulness and disregard of personal ease, that the purposes of God may be worked out in others. Of course, I am not making out that the graces of religion require me to prove that marriage is a sacrament, necessary to salvation. That subject I mean to treat alone, when I speak of the unmarried. I simply make this point: while the literature of the age which is most read, gives to the subject the

golden hue of Eden, and the young come together, in this relation, with their minds set on the worldly pleasures and advantages of it; the nobler thought, which is forgotten, is, that it is the beginning of the life of duty, in mutual work. If there were no pleasures in it, the other thought alone ought to make it the shrine of the most heroic ambition. There are such marriages and such homes. The infidel age can see no way out of them; no profound duty in them. The fond faith in the fact of self-pleasing, is so indoctrinated in us all, that we imagine that the Son of God came down from heaven to die, that we might see how God loves us and wishes us to have a good time, and indulge our contemptible selfishness to the utmost. Have we no faith in anything better than our own pleasure? If not, God help us, for nature has no place for us. Fortunately, in these realities of daily life, the teaching goes on ever, whether we take it easy or hard. Would that our sense of duty to God were more in harmony with the necessity of a faith in the duties of home-life. They are too much disconnected, and both religion and home suffer. The relation is the issuance of a new law to both, from the time of its beginning onwards; and it is a law in two tables.

The first table is, that the true dictate of the noblest part of man, is to love some one better than himself. I do not now speak of the heroic, but of the ordinary.

The second table is made up of duties assumed to



infants and young children, by which a man becomes like his Maker. He is a second providence—and prepares to give himself, to die and get out of the way, for others. And in both tables the sublime of love is the fulfilling of the Law. The first thing that is taught and learned, by both parents, is the development of personal happiness, in the sense of making another's interests the first consideration. We call this love, *par excellence*. The poets rave about it. The thrilling themes of literature are based on it. Shall the religion of Christ have no recognition of it? It seems to me, that the apostle has shown his appreciation of it, when he reasons of the love which God has revealed in Christ, as needing this similitude to make it comprehended by us. He teaches the duty of men to their wives, by the similitude of Christ and the Church. Then he turns it round and reveals the love of God to us, by the love of this one relation. Now I am aiming at the thought, that there is a similarity in the two sorts of love, which can help both the Church and the home of a man, if he will study it. If a man believes that it makes him a better Christian, to be what he feels he ought to be towards his wife and children, that as he learns the catechism of duty to them, he is rising in the esteem of the Church, he has a higher motive to be a true man in both places. If he has some narrow conceit about faith and works, which leads him to be indifferent to his home-duties, and to indulge in the dreams of a religion which condones

his selfishness and disregard of the gentler affections of his family, then he is out of joint with home and Church both. The first table of the home law, then, is the fact of a love for another, that can begin the cure of selfishness; can give one that satisfaction, at the self-denials of every day, which creates and rewards faith and gilds the toils of life. Here is a man, who toils from Monday to Saturday, year in and year out. For three hundred days every year he makes and sells; he goes over the ferry in snow and sleet; he occupies a dull back office, and indulges his eye with the bricks of his neighbor's store; and for what? Does he like it? He does not complain. He has rewards in it, as he goes on. It may seem to him hard at times. He is sometimes cast down at the drag and the monotony, the fears and the anxieties of it. The harness galls him sometimes, but he has glided into it by a faith which he got somehow. He grew up out of the careless, rollicking, and selfish boy, and set his face to the grindstone, and hardly ever stopped to analyze the process. He called it sowing his wild oats. Nature teaches us so gently, that we are not always turning the page to mark the advances that we make. But he learned first from a woman, and there were various passing illusions, it may be, which mingled in with the truth that the noblest life is found in working for others. He saw an example set him, and with more or less fidelity carried out, that to love another better than oneself is the secret of happiness in this world.

Before he had weighed it in all its bearings, he had become converted to the principle. If I may put his faith into the words of a poet, it is this :

“To make a happy fireside clime  
For weans and wife,  
That’s the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life.”

He toils on now, the steady worker, the sober and sedate citizen, and his earnings go to help others. When he is dead, he hopes to leave his memory in the hearts of his children. That man lives by faith. It is a pity that he does not always know it, and raise the spirit of his walk and conversation into a song of praise to God. To see how much he walks by faith, go and convince him that his family are unworthy, and behold how his nerve is destroyed.

I cannot close better than with two pictures, which can speak for themselves. The one is from the *New York Tribune* of yesterday, as follows, of life in Paris among the laboring people, who are always in the majority. It occurs in the letter of a Frenchman in Paris :

“The great problems of politics cannot be solved by talkers who have never breathed the air of a workshop. Their solution lies in this simple idea, the daily bread of body and soul, *through labor and through love*. But this labor will never become attractive unless the family sentiment of the family resumes its power. Grogshops should be rigorously shut on Mondays. The laborer begins the week too badly to end it well. Since he no longer recognizes the Church nor knows anything of the Bible—since he makes it his pride to be buried like a dog, his home is nothing but a den from which his daughter escapes from terror as soon as she is sixteen years old, and from

which his son naturally passes to the prison of *La Roquette*. The house is hell, where the husband beats the wife on the days when they are not spreeing together. That the education of such a household might be complete, the Satanic paper has appeared. The worst of criminals is the journalist who takes charge of souls, without any call thereto, and who scatters abroad the pestilent crop of lies. He always preaches atheism. He takes from those who have nothing on earth, the idea of heaven. He commands them to leave hope behind, here and hereafter. Religion, even if it has nothing to do with government, impresses on the heart respect for law. It is the dignity of the poor man, the humility of the rich. Out of the Church there is no social salvation. What is a woman nowadays to do, without bread or work—her children sick in the cradle—her husband in the wineshop? Once she could look to God for help or resignation. Now she is all alone. The sentiment of duty accomplished is strength and rest to the conscience when one believes in a better life. But the common people have sold to atheism their share in paradise."

This, for a French reporter, is pretty fair gospel. It is fearful when we think that he is telling of gloomy facts, and they have their counterpart in Brooklyn. I call to your notice, that he charges the whole trouble *on the man*; where it ought to lie.

The other picture is not from a divine, either. It is poor Burns' "*Cottager*." The world has stamped on it the marks of truth. The children of a Scotch peasant are seen to gather in to the sacred retreat of a rustic home. You feel that the place is to them the *Bethel*, the house of God indeed. The air *feels* safe. It is here to be noted again, that the *father* is the centre of the picture. An unmentioned authority is made to emanate from him, which nothing else could atone for. He



“Turns o’er with patriarchal grace,  
The big ha’ Bible, ance his father’s pride ;”

“He wales the psalm” for their praise, as they sing the old tunes, to which Burns thought “Italian trills, tame.” The priest-like father “reads the sacred page,” and is for the time the visible priest and supreme, rightful head of the family.

“Then kneeling down, to heaven’s eternal King,  
The saint, the father and the husband prays ;”

“Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,  
That thus they all shall meet in future days :  
There ever bask in uncreated rays.  
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,  
Together hymning their Creator’s praise,  
In such society, yet still more dear ;

While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.”

The poet draws two lessons from this scene, and there can be no doubt of either of them.

“Compared with this, how poor religion’s pride,”

if it be without these virtues, or if it despise them.

“From scenes like these old Scotia’s grandeur springs.”

It is the true life of any nation, that its men be as true to their duties, to home and God, as the fellow countrymen of Burns were in his time. It realizes to my mind the scene, which was in the text of St. Peter: “Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge,” that is, intelligently and honorably, and not as the pagans and profane unbelievers; giving honor to the wife, as to the physically weaker, and in her weakness relying on your strength and

generosity for protection. Then he introduces the thought that binds the two to the altar of religion; and "as being heirs *together*," not apart; not by a religion that somehow condones the offences of neglect at home and pretence abroad; but *together*, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Brethren, may your prayers ascend from such family altars, and help you on the way of this life and a better, at one and the same time.

## X.

### HOMES.—THE MOTHER.

*"This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."*—EPH. v. 32.



SACRAMENTUM *hoc magnum est*, says the Vulgate, and the Latin Church has enrolled the rite as one of the seven sacraments. The Reformers raised a vast outcry against their false theology, and from that time to this, the question has been open to the disputation, as the favorite theme of a varied and endless discussion. Our own Church has taken the moderate course, and while denying that it is "a sacrament of the gospel," but rather a state of life allowed in the scriptures, she has declared it honorable in all men ; and has generally considered the authority of the minister of religion and the blessing of the Church as most fitting to its beauty and due performance. The Church of England has guarded the ceremony with the utmost care, and the Episcopal Church in this country has instinctively followed

her in this jealousy of the purity of the rite. It is not my purpose to go into any lengthy argument, to show the meaning of St. Paul, in regard to the word *mystery*. It will be simply asserted by me, and any one can test the verity of the assertion, that he meant, simply: this is a religious truth; that is, a truth of the same kind of faith, as that which holds the assertion of Christ and the Church to be a mystery. *Now*, in our common way of speaking, a *mystery* is something that transcends the understanding; anciently it was the other way. A mystery was something which was in the reach of the faith, and which was revealed in order to be received. But in this case St. Paul has been running in his own mind, the parallel of the married couple on the one side and Christ and the Church on the other. He appropriately concludes it with the summary assertion, which belongs to both thoughts: this is a mystery, this is a religious teaching, *i. e.*, this parallel of the marriage of two persons and the union of Christ and the soul. This is not saying that either part of the parallel is a mystery, much less that marriage is a Church sacrament, in any dogmatic sense: but that the likeness, which he had in mind, is so. The best way to make my statement good is to show that he had this similitude in mind. I attempt this, saying at the same time that I have never seen it done. It may be a dogmatic heresy in me. My only hope is, that it may seem to you to be only common sense.



My purpose, to-night, in the course of these remarks on *home*, is to show the place of woman in the home—nothing more. As to her rights or even her duties there, I say in advance, I have no intention of detailing them. I had rather have the one fact, which tells me the relative position of certain truths which affect me, than any man's idea of how I ought to feel about them. How he feels about it is one's own business; it is mine to take what of truth St. Paul has expressed, and work out of it my own law. If I can make the idea in my mind understood by you, and then made worthy of your thought, I shall be content to leave it to do its own work in your minds and lives. In trying to do this, I shall in due time have recourse to this passage of St. Paul.

But I propose just here two thoughts about the woman in the home: I. As the wife. Then, II. As the mother. It seems stupid to draw attention to the violent contrast between her position and that of any two friends, of either sex. Yet there have been friends who, like David, claimed by a bold flight of fancy, that their love passed the love of women. There is no sort of congruity in the two conditions. You cannot use the same language about them. You could in no sense imagine the uses of the language that now prevails applied to two friends. You can imagine the greatest love and delicacy of mutual help and reciprocity, but you can in no just sense or by any stretch of imagination attribute to them the same love, delicacy, help or reciprocity. But what I wish

to emphasize, is the fact that though the duties of friendship are of the strongest kind, you never would confuse the religious element of the one with the natural sentiments of the other. You could not easily imagine an Apostle, by any train of reasoning, at last brought to a point in his argument, when he would apparently stop with a sigh of relief, to say, as if it stopped all debate, but "This is a great mystery, this matter of two friends; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." But why not? The answer is plain. In the one case all the religions of the world have accepted the mystery, that is, the religious sense of the race in regarding the one. No religion of men has ever attempted to elevate the other above the line of the ordinary human affections. Of friendship, the sweetest things can be said. The old Greek and Roman races, bred in camps, adorned friendship, and exalted it into the noblest of the relations. The old soldier chose his younger companion, and taught him the art of war, defended him in the battle, cheered him on the rough march, and took part with him in all his dangers. As with Paul and Timothy, he expected the younger to receive the last messages of his love and to bury him after he was gone, if it could be so. But where can we look for any expression of the mingling the sense of the mysteries of religion with this affection? There is nothing of it.

Let us see the discrepancy a little farther. Imagine one reading in the Epistle of St. Paul,

something like this: "Younger friend, submit yourself to the older soldier-friend, as unto the Lord. For the older is the head of the younger, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the body of the other. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the younger man be subject to his particular elder, in everything." The absurdity is evident. But why? If the infidel reasonings—allowing for the moment, that they are reasonings, which reasonings are none—if they have any just claim to regard, then the relations of the two classes are the same. The woman in her marriage relation is held to be only another sort of man; she demands equality. She makes an ordinary contract—she asserts her own will. She repudiates the idea of any obedience, and, funnily enough to my mind, she rejects with scorn the noble precepts of this one apostle, which place her on the highest pinnacle of almost religious adoration. He exalts her into the next place to the Church of the Son of God; that Bride of the Eternal veiled in flesh which is supposed by him to be worthy the love of the Almighty, and destined to receive yet the triumphal epithalamiums of the purest of angelic hosts.

I claim that this religious idea runs through the Bible, and colors all our Christian civilization. I could willingly give place here to Bishop Taylor, and speak only as he has spoken. On this point he says: "Marriage was ordained by God, instituted in paradise,

was the relief of a natural necessity, and the first blessing from the Lord ; he gave to man, not a friend, but a wife, that is a friend and a wife too ( for a good woman is in her soul the same that a man is, and she is a woman only in her body ; that she may have the excellency of the one, and the usefulness of the other, and become amiable in both) : it is the seminary of the Church, and daily brings forth sons and daughters unto God. The first miracle that Jesus ever did, was to do honor to a wedding ; marriage was in the world before sin, and is in all ages of the world the greatest and most effective antidote against sin, in which all the world had perished, if God had not made a remedy." "Here is the proper scene of piety and patience, of the duty of parents and the charity of relatives ; here kindness is spread abroad, and love is united and made firm as a centre ; marriage is the nursery of heaven ; the virgin sends prayers to God, but she carries but one soul to him ; but the state of marriage fills up the numbers of the elect, and hath in it the labor of love, and the delicacies of friendship ; the blessing of society, and the union of hands and hearts ; it hath in it less of beauty, but more of safety than the single life ; it hath more care, but less danger ; it is more merry and more sad ; it is fuller of sorrows and fuller of joys ; it lies under more burdens, and is supported by all the strengths of love and charity, and those burdens are delightful."

In treating this text, he says : "Single life makes men in one sense to be like angels ; but marriage in



very many things makes the chaste pair to be like to Christ. 'This is a great mystery,' but it is the symbolical and sacramental representation of the greatest mysteries of our religion. Christ descended from his Father's bosom, and contracted his divinity with flesh and blood, and married our nature, and we became a Church, the Spouse of the Bridegroom, which he cleansed with his blood, and gave her the Holy Spirit for a dowry, and heaven for a jointure; begetting children unto God by the Gospel. This Spouse he has joined to himself, by an excellent charity; he feeds her at his own table, and lodges her nigh his own heart; provides for all her necessities, relieves her sorrows, determines her doubts, guides her wanderings. He is become her head, and she as a signet on his right hand.

"Here is the eternal conjunction, the indissoluble knot, the exceeding love of Christ, the obedience of the Spouse, the communicating of goods, the uniting of interests, the fruit of marriage, a celestial generation, a new creature: *Sacramentum hoc magnum est*. This is the sacramental mystery, represented by the holy rite of marriage; so that marriage is divine in its institution, sacred in its union, holy in the mystery, sacramental in its signification, honorable in its appellation, religious in its employments: it is advantage to the societies of men, and it is 'holiness to the Lord.' *Dico autem in Christo et ecclesia*, it must be in Christ and the Church."

Bishop Taylor was a poet as well as a preacher.

There are some things in religion, (or God help me,) that need the combination of the two. There is too often a prosaic seeing that sees not; and what is more dreary than the common sense of Mr. Gradgrind, who adheres strictly to facts, and shipwrecks his home on the points of his heartless theories. What is sadder than two married people, who have no gentle faith in each other? to whom each is only as five feet some inches of mere dying clay? There is a union, which helps us to look through the things which are seen, to the things which are eternal, in that they are supersensual and spiritual; in which:

“More divine,  
The light of love shines over all;  
Of love, that says not mine and thine,  
But ours, for ours is thine and mine.”

It is on this religious ground, that the vagaries of the fanatics of the day are seen to shrink up and show themselves mean and paltry. It is in this faith that woman has a religious work of her own, which is not committed to man; that the institutions of life become the “bringing in of a better hope, by the which we draw nigh unto God.” He gave to man the curse of the ground, for his sake, and to woman He gave the first promise of the coming seed, which should bruise the serpent head of evil. For ages this was the only revelation that the race of Adam had, and they built on it the modal thoughts of the religions which have followed since.

It behooves women to ponder this fact. The

interests of true religion as well as the institutions of home demand it of them. What is often thought to be progress in new theories of social life, is merely forgetfulness of world-old truths, that must not be forgotten. If you ask me to give these duties of the female sex in detail, I answer, they are seen in this chapter.

I. It is the religious trust of woman, to render obedience lovely, by lifting it out of the arena of mere mannishness. It is in her heart, to give it a divine significance. "As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the woman be to her own husband." I defy you to find any social relation of two men, of which you could speak in such words. It is the divinest idea of obedience in the reach of the imagination. It is inconceivable outside of the idea of the Church of the Saviour. Aristotle never dreamed of it. It had no place in any philosophy of man's compounding. It belongs to the religion of the crucified; and it is to it, as the moon is to the sun, a reflected light. It is the charge of woman to continue and give force to it forever, in the civilization of men.

II. Love, as a religion, is committed to women. I think that St. Paul has gone as far as I care to go in emphasizing the thought. He certainly has thrown himself into the reasoning of this chapter with an abandonment, which is total. He has identified the love of Christ and the Church, with the love of married life, with fearless logic. Let a man

love his wife as Christ loves the Church. Try it now. Let a man love another; let a son love his father; let a scholar love his teacher; let a soldier love his captain; let a subject love his king, as Christ loves the Church. I do not say, that the wife must love her husband as the Church loves Christ; but if she does it better, I shall not fault her. It is not a question of degree and comparison. In the logic of the heart, there is no room for these niceties. The test of the true Christian thought, is, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Every believer gratefully receives the rule into an unquestioning heart. It exalts him, as he can make it real. It is the actuality of his faith. He runs to find where he can obey, because he knows by sweet experience, that every act of obedience is the avenue to new blessings.

It was the thought of St. Paul, that the union of the soul of Christians to Christ, and through him to God, is as close, in thought, as the union of the soul and body in an individual man. And in this conception I believe that he was inspired. It is a thought that takes hold on the deepest mysteries of salvation; it is a maxim in a super-sensual philosophy. There was before him a mystical body, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, the Bride, the Woman-thought of the great drama of the world's history, the Christ-mother-thought, the wedding into Divine union of this Humanity and the eternal God, and thus raising religion out of the region of mere morals and above



the question of even personal salvation, and lightening the darkness of the future by the dream of espousals, that shall have in them the cream of all possible conceptions of joy, as at the last we shall conceive, what is now inconceivable, of the things which God hath in store for them that love him. How often does St. Paul betray to us that it cheered him under all his troubles and persecutions, this thought of perfect union of love and nature with the Lord Jesus. Christ was born in him; and the stormy ocean only rocked the cradle of this infant hope. Clouds and darkness, wicked men and diabolical dragons trooped around him to drive him to dismay; but Christ was in him, breathed with his lungs, stirred his quick pulses, touched the strange thinkings of his brain, and fear and doubt vanished. He and truth were one. Tyrants and devils were only shams. If you will only gather into one place, all that he has said on this thought, you will see, that if he had one faith, that he felt, struggled always for utterance, it was this. He and all Christians are identified in the sight of God the Father, with the man Christ Jesus. His whole ecclesiastical theory, his exhortation to belief, and his system of morals, alike turned on this conception. If you drop it out of his teaching, you lose St. Paul at once. Now, he has expressed it here, "He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his

bones. For this cause"—note the words—for this cause, *i. e.*, to reveal this union of the soul of man to God, which is the very foundation-thought of all religion—"for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." This is a great mystery, but it began in Eden. It is put in charge of the religion of the world, never to lose this similitude of the union of the redeemed to Christ.

I suppose that God might have made the world and continued the generations of men by some other rule than the one he has adopted. But in this, under which we are living now, I see the union of all things in the faith of the Church of Christ. I see that in a deep sense, the first Church is the home, and the women, like the vestals of old, are set to guard its fires, that if men lose out of mind the knowledge of the love of God in Christ, they may be won again by the chaste conversation of the wife, coupled with reverent fear of her high mission.

II. *I am to speak of her as the mother.* The region of sentiment, I would gladly leave, in trying seriously to express myself on this tender theme; but what I mean to say in sober earnest will possibly take on something of the hue of moonlight. But, is not moonlight itself a fact? Did not God make the moon to rule, by her reflected light, when that is the best that one may have? I rather take pride in the fact, that it is the sign of the hardest and most shameful character that a man can give, when he fails to feel soft-

ened at the name of his mother. She stands nearer to his secret tenderness for the divine, than even his father. His father reasoned with him. But reason is the guide of time. It steers the bark now; and Solomon, in a nice distinction of a proverb, speaks of the *instruction of the father*; that which one may reason about, and weigh in the balances and scrutinize, and modify, by his own experience.

We value the instruction of the schoolmaster. It is the best that we can start with. We take it into docile minds. We mean to be guided by it until we know better. Most of it we shall always hold and profit by; but we shall profit by it because we analyze it and intelligently accept it, first by faith in him, then by experience of it. But he contrasts with it, and not by accident, *the law of the mother*. The wisdom of morals is almost always personified in the Bible, as feminine. The divine ideal of the truth is always so. The Church, or ideal of man's salvation, is female. And all for two reasons, among others: I. Because the instincts mingle in it and refuse to debate its laws. II. Because it woos and wins the heart, rather than rests in the cold, cobwebby garret of the understanding.

Into a home of two young people, comes a

“Little angel unaware,  
With face as round as is the moon.”

In due time, we will say, the mother begins the duties of a college faculty for the child. She studies

the ancient and modern philosophies; she balances the pantheist against the deist: she tries the vortices of one metaphysician and corrects them with the *dubito, ergo sum* of another, and at last she is able to impress on this young student the proposition, there is a God. Having stored his mind with the solid ideas of the school, she proceeds to deduce from it the morals of life: the duty to God and the duty to neighbors, asking nothing from faith: deducing all duties by logic alone. *Is it so?* Would you have it so? What then would become of all the things that no tongue ever can tell of, and no words contain, and yet they are the very blood of the heart and are in the fibre of the muscles of all noble character. No! first comes the *law of the mother*. The first altar at which a good man kneels is his mother's knee. Her hand on his brow is "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The love seen in her eyes, is the first revelation to him of the angels. Yea, it is the revelation of God—for God at last is known to us, as *Love*. It\* reveals to us Christ, in its self-forgetfulness and self-denials.

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\* "There is hardly any one but has known some household in which, year after year, selfishness, and worldliness, and want of family affection, have been apparent enough; and yet instead of the moral shipwreck, which might have been expected, and the final moral ruin of the various members, the original bond of union has held together; there has plainly been some counteracting, redeeming power at work. And when we look to see what is that redeeming power, ever at work for those who know and care nothing about it, we always find that there is some member of that family—oftenest the wife or mother—who is silently bearing all things, believing all things,



Hear how Solomon puts it. "My son, keep thy father's commandment and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp"—please mark that; *a lamp*—but where is the flame of it? And the law—of the mother—is the light; and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life: to keep thee (from what? From metaphysical distinctions and scepticisms? No. But) "from the evil woman, from the flattery of a strange tongue." Instruction is to law as the moulded candle formed and shaped by art and man's device, is to the light, which comes only from God. The one is reason; the other is life. The one we can mark with signs and ornament at will, the other is purest as it comes from the heart of love. So, as the Church tells us of her absent Lord, and realizes to us His virtues, and kindles our faith in all that is divine, the mother folds the little hands, and communicates the first creed, catholic

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hoping all things for them, but for her or himself expecting little or nothing in this world, but the rest of the grave. Such a one is really bearing the sins of that household: it is no forensic phrase transferred by way of illustration from the practice of the law courts: but a fact, a vital formation, actually taking place, here, under our very eyes. He who has seen and understood this fact, in any one of its common daily shapes, needs no commentary on the realization of the Man of Sorrows, alike in the suffering Prophet or People of the Captivity, and in the Divine Sufferer on Calvary."—SIR E. STUCKEY, quoted by DEAN STANLEY.

and apostolic, which begins with "*our Father*." Her lessons are as the "dew of Hermon that falls on the little hill of Zion ; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

I can do no better than conclude with the picture of a good wife and mother, as the English Church cherished her two hundred years ago. "In passing through which line of providence," says Bishop Taylor, of a good woman, "she had the art to secure her eternal interest, by turning her condition into duty, and expressing her duty in the greatest eminency of a virtuous, prudent, and rare affection, that hath been known in any example. Her husband was, under God, the light of her eyes, and the cordial of her spirits, and the guide of her actions, and the measure of her affections, till her affections swelled up into a religion, and then it could go no higher, but was confederate with those other duties which made her dear to God : which rare combination of duty and religion I choose to express in the words of Solomon : 'she forsook not the guide of her youth, nor brake the covenant of her God.'

"As she was a rare wife, so she was an excellent mother : for in so tender a constitution of spirit as hers was, and in so great kindness towards her children, there hath seldom been seen a stricter and more curious care of their persons, their deportment, their learning, and their customs ; and if ever kindness and care did contest and make parties in her, yet her care and her severity were ever

victorious; and she knew not how to do an ill turn to their severer part, by her more tender and forward kindness. And as her custom was, she turned this also into love to her Lord: for she was not only diligent to have them bred nobly and religiously, but also was careful and solicitous that they should be taught to observe all the circumstances and inclinations, the desires and wishes of their father; as thinking that virtue to have no good circumstances, which was not dressed by his copy, and ruled by his lines and affections: and her prudence in managing her children was so singular and rare, that whenever you mean to bless this family, and pray a hearty and a profitable prayer for it, beg of God that the children may have those excellent things which she designed to them, and provided for them in her heart and wishes; that they may live by her purposes, and may grow thither, whither she would fain have brought them. All these were parts of an excellent religion, as they concerned her greatest temporal relations."

There are proud monuments in the cathedrals and old abbeys of England, but none rarer than this which consecrates the name of the *Lady Frances, Countess of Carberry*. If the picture seems to you old-fashioned; God help us to value the religion, which taught men to admire and cherish such wives and matrons. It is the religion of home and of nature. It is the religion to which we must return, if we would have the blessing of God.

## XI.

### SONS AT HOME.

*"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth."*—PSALM cxliv. 12.

**K**ING DAVID is here praying in the measures of a song of public praise, to the Lord, to deliver his nation from the power of enemies, so that the great ends of national life might be answered in a reign of peace. He was a man of war. But there was something in him better than that. He was a thinker. He looked behind the appearances of to-day, and was worthy of his title of the man after God's own heart—inasmuch as he too, had some vague notion of the great duty of kings and judges, in seeking to advance the good of the weaker members of society, and not their own pleasures. He now prays for a peaceful reign. "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children." These strange children are the people of the Gentile stock, who served other gods; and in the different methods of education which



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resulted from the difference of their ideas and manners, were to be dreaded by him, for their evil influences on the younger members of his kingdom. They were strange children; they would inoculate his children with strangeness. They had a mouth "speaking vanity." They would injure his young people with their own pagan follies, until they would lose the finer sense of the true servants of the covenant of their fathers' God. Their "right hand was a right hand of falsehood:" in other words, there was the common infidelity to vows and covenant pledges which marked the infidel nations of the ancient world. They would corrupt the simplicity of the pious youth of the Jewish faith, and turn them aside from the stricter fidelity of the law of Moses. The idea of the passage then is seen to be, the care of the elder and the kingly father for the peace of the realm, because of the good which it would do to the young, and to the material interests of his kingdom. It is in this connection, then, that the text occurs, "Give us peace and freedom from the presence of the heathen; that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace: that our garners may be full and plentiful," and the like. It is enough for my purpose, that the Psalmist is seen to value the seclusion and freedom of his nation from outside influences and unbeliefs, that the true race of sons of Jehovah might be educated in the principles of true living,

and while they prospered in material blessings, might be happy in the knowledge of the Lord as their God.

Possibly the majority of Christians may be disposed to think it a peculiarity of the Gospel, that those who practice on its plan of life, are to pray only after another ideal of blessings; for instance: "Give us all manner of trouble and worry; send us vexations and pour out thy rich favors of disappointment upon us; let our sons grow up as stunted trees, all gnarled and twisted with liberal opinions and misbeliefs of all sorts; and our daughters be as the despised corners of a hut, with as little to admire and love as may be about them; for the true Christian is one who despises all earthly advantages and is too sublime and up-lifted for the temptations of such earthly pleasures and considerations to move him."

I will not misquote the passages of scripture which might be suggested in this connection, to justify this hardness of heart; but there is too much of the old ascetic spirit, which lingers in the habits of our thought, and which is in some respects not as respectable now as it was of old, when men were made of sterner stuff. Then it made men suffer in their own persons: now it is too apt to lead them to neglect the finer duties to others, and to imagine themselves to be very strict in their lives, simply because they are severe in their notions. It is one of these severe notions which cuts the main nerve of influence of the home piety, in the right education of young men. It cannot be denied, that the Christianity of this democ-

racy of ours, is feminine in excess. The motives leading to profession of public care for Christian morals are such as appeal to them especially. It is pretty much given up that it is their department, and the weak and designing take advantage of this disturbed balance in the public mind, to increase the original evil, and to make religion seem a thing of feeling rather than of stern principle and righteous obedience. We are sometimes asked, "Which are the most religious, men or women?" It is as sensible to ask: "Which gives the most light, the sun or the moon?" One of the moonlight vagaries of the popular notions of duty, is that which would find fault with St. Paul, for saying to children: "Honor your parents, for that is the first commandment with promise." They would perhaps get the apostle out of the difficulty, by the suggestion that the promise, as he meant it, is altogether spiritual and celestial. I do not invite you to follow me now on this higher plane of thought, but on one much less sublime and common-place; on the material considerations of the influences of home on the boys of a family, in the attempt of parents to educate them as men of true character. I propose to speak rather to the older son of the family, as the one who has the duty imposed on him by nature of setting an example to the other and younger children. He is the natural protector of his brothers in all their little fights which make up a part of their lives. They wax bold under the wing of his power. He is the true knight who puts spear in rest, according to the

known laws of a chivalry for his sisters, the age of which has not yet gone by. The man may look on all women as common place. The boy has the same dreams of romance which fired the minds of the ancient orders of chivalry.

I imagine then a home of ordinary healthy boys and girls, with an elder brother, who has a fair right over the rest in being loved by them, as one of themselves, only immensely wiser, and more advanced, by a year or two, in the race of life. I may say, in passing, that I have in no case imagined a perfect home. I began these sermons with the idea that the disappointments of life are meant to wean us from absorption in this world, and I propose, before I get through, to show, that in a proper home the downward path of the aged is made smooth in the domestic regimen, as guided by the providence of God. My one desire in all this scheme of life and religion, is to suggest the truth that there is a domestic religion and a *household Church*, as something pre-eminent and above the distorted sectarian views of the religion of the times. The boy need not then be a paragon, nor his home a paradise. The average in both will suit me better.

Two ideas are in the text. Let us look at them. I. The protection of home from coarse, profane and infidel suggestions. Walking through the streets of Boston, the other day, in an old-fashioned snow-storm, I passed by a little chap of four years of age, whose mother had put him out to revel in the



mysteries of cleaning the pavement, with a hoe two feet long. He was booted with huge arctics, not quite up to his chin, and an overwhelming 'Ulster' on of the jauntiest cut, with the monks-hood of it drawn over his wee face, ruddy with health and glowing with the importance of his public labors. The face told its story of parental devotion. A painter could have found it in his heart to sketch the young aristocrat. I found myself dreaming, as I went on, of the cool New-England aristocracy, as I have known it in years gone by. The next turn of thought, was the sight of a newsboy, tough, sharp and self-poised; not over-clothed; with hands in pocket, as is the vulgar rule now; and not at all clean, as is getting to be more and more the rule now, with the poor; but with the man's marks all over him, "grown up before his time." The voice was sharp, the manner was impudent and self-reliant. The coolness of his intellect rivalled the snow in temperature, but not in whiteness. Now I know, that the Great Father of all looks down in tenderness, on both boys; that a time comes, when all our intellectual difficulties about the allotments of each condition will be met, in the judgment of Him who saw Dives and Lazarus, both here and in the world of souls. We however are obliged to look at both here primarily, and accept the laws of this imperfect world as we see them. No parent now would read the story of Dives and Lazarus to his child, and then turn him out to work out his salvation, by associa-

ting with the other. This is an extreme illustration. But it suggests my meaning. It is the duty of common sense and true godliness as well, to guard home from strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and often something worse; and their right hand, yea and left too, is a hand of falsehood and iniquity.

You guard your children from small-pox, and tremble if any one of their young companions has been found afflicted with the diphtheria. It is only the same fear of the moral impurity, which tells you to do as much for their souls. No man can raise a tree from a sapling, by tossing it into the earth in any and every place, and letting it grow. If another overshadows it, if neighbors, neglecting their children, allow them indulgences, which you deny yours, you will find that the child is not all pure reason; that it does not balance duties by the sage maxims of your experience. It feels, it imitates; it, like the magnet and the iron filings, is influenced by the power that is nearest to it. Too much intellection in a parent is often as bad as too little. They act so much by it, that they trust to it, in the affairs of life, where far other influences come in and assume ascendancy. I claim then that the bigotry of a man, who denies the liberality of tenderness toward vice or evil notions of duty, is just and righteous. I have held it to be among the most sacred duties of life, to deny promptly and repudiate severely, any wrong notion of morals, religion or politics, without regard

to lesser considerations, if they have ever been uttered in the presence of my children. There is no grander passage in any book of light literature, than that in Thackeray's novel, where old Colonel Newcome resents the vile language which had been used in the presence of his son. In my judgment, that boy has not a fair chance for an honest life, whose father is either too indifferent or too cowardly to do the same. What tree can grow straight, if you, who have the keeping of it, dare not put out your hand to guide, lest you may be stung by a hornet or defiled by a slug?

II. The other idea in the text is veiled, but not concealed in the metaphor. "Our sons, as plants, grown up in their youth." The character which marks a young plant in a climate such as Palestine, is superabundance of vigor. The Psalmist, on another occasion, revels in the picture of a righteous Jew, as being like a tree, planted by the water side, which bringeth forth his fruit in his season. The young sapling, in our forests, or in some sheltered corner of a garden, gives us the feeling of excess of life. It is busy in one thing alone—the act of growing. It is something so with the boy, in the passage from infancy to manhood. There is an excess of the physical life. The physical life means a great deal. He lives in the present. It is next to impossible to induce him to accept the warnings of the weak and the aged. Now I maintain, that as with the tree, there is the time when the future duties are unknown,

when the flower and fruit work of the summer and fall, and the weary fall of the leaf of the late autumn and winter are not only unknown, but really out of place; so the piety of the young boy is not that of the grown man, and never will be; indeed never ought to be. It is the error of the weak to try and superinduce the character of the gray beard on the mind of the inexperienced. In the excessive anxiety which we have professed to make all men equal, it is to be feared that we have overlooked the fact, in our views of morals, that all men are not experienced, for a long while; that no man's summer comes naturally till after the spring has passed. Of course in the excess of the physical life, in the rapid bounding of the blood, the excitements of the brain and the ignorance of the boy, we expect to find greater temptations and often greater signs of disagreeable and inconvenient animalism. These are the subjects of the wise administration of our homes. And here I plant myself, as on the strong ground of fact and law, that the moral education of home is not to be compared with any academical or public system. All others may educate the head perhaps as well. But this is the divine appointment for regulating the heart.

Given, the educating a healthy boy, out of the carnality of our first condition of being, in which we are good feeders and sound sleepers, and with vigorous health, have the temptations of the excess of vigor. I say, that there is in the home of the parents, the



true safeguards, which can be found no where else. The Church does not have them. Certainly the school does not afford them.

The boy then is at the minimum of moral reason—I say, a healthy boy. There are youthful saints of weak health, who show a precocity which is abnormal, and a conveniency which is sage, but unwholesome. They are exceptions: we need not count them in. I speak only of sound, noisy, roystering and inconvenient boys, in whom parents take pride, even while they wish them asleep. Boys, who give occasion for the reproof of ‘don’t, my son,’ twenty times an hour. I do not know how much of the experience of the class, I may represent; but boys, in my time, were educated to think that they were by nature lost forever; that God was angry with them all the time, and every day. They were a class who looked upon the minister or deacon as about as tempting company as the ghostly inhabitants of the graveyard would be. I seem to see a confession of the mistake of the past, in the great attention now being paid to the celebrations of Sunday-schools, in order to attract the young. It will fail. It is no more the work of the Church to provide entertainments and rewards of piety than it is to superintend penitentiaries. The object which is aimed at, in these things, is the proper duty of the home, not of the Church. I am very much obliged to my neighbor if he thinks fit to give my children any pleasure as a reward for what he likes in them, but before he

creates a system of doing it, and requires me to follow his example, it may be well to ask if there are no other and better ways of regulating one's family. If religion is not lovely in itself, can we make it so by appeals to other considerations? That religious culture is the best which is the truest to the wants of all classes. As the child of a Puritan is seen at times to desert the bald service of Congregationalism for a liturgy, so the question is not to be met in this case, by any half-way measures of popularizing a bald system. It is vital, in my judgment, to have a Church, in which the boys shall grow up into it as naturally as they did into the Church of the Israelites; as they do into the great Churches of the nations of Europe.

In boyhood, the reason, and with it the gravity of age is not developed, or they ought not to be. In spite of all the geniuses of two-and-twenty, who aspire to pass our laws and regulate our morals, or who convert thousands, with the story of their immoralities, it is still true that the old have experience, which in its homely way teaches knowledge of good and evil. "With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding." In the growing time of life, the influences from without are the strongest. In other words, the senses are the chief avenues of knowledge. The thinking on abstract premises is at its minimum. The reflection comes afterward. Then is the time of laying up the stores of food for that reflection. The chief life is

that of the perceptions and the affections. The sentiments are in their unformed protoplasm. The sap is poured into the new channels, and the very body is developing as yet towards its future condition. It is then that the home is the divine provision for the true education of the future man.

This is the Scripture idea. Look at the carefulness of Moses in teaching the people, to guide their own sons and guide them *at home*. The priest, as he regarded him, was to keep knowledge, and the high-priest was to offer sacrifices of atonement, and consult the oracle; but the religious education of the men and women was committed to the home-influences. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." This is the father's work, not the preacher's. So, "when the son, in time to come, asketh thee what are these testimonies, statutes and judgments of the Lord;" the answer was to come from the father, not from the priest alone, while the father stood by and said nothing. Again and again Moses returns to this idea. He founds the promise of prosperity on it. "That your days may be multiplied and the days of thy children in

the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them."

It is the same idea of the first commandment with promise: the palladium of a nation's safety, is in the honor of parents by the children. Look at your own nation. This nation is reeling in the balance to-day by vices which show the want of this home honor. No man deliberately teaches his son to steal or lie. If he steals himself or lies himself, he sends his boy away to be taught by some one else not to do such things. Some one else either reasons it all out in the forms of the school, or denounces it in the language of the pulpit. But God did not commit it to either, but to you, and to you first. The boy is not yet so much under the influence of reason, and he is not improved in Christian manhood by threats. He is best led by his affections, by his sensational experiences. He can *see* your honor. He can take pride in the proofs of your truthfulness. He can be interpenetrated by the atmosphere of your regimen, for he has in him the mystery of filial love and a likeness of nature. You may be the most meagre of men to others, who know what it takes to make a man; but to him, you are yet the Bayard, without reproach. No man is so absolutely a fool, that he cannot be true and honest. And if he is so, in the secrets of his family life, he may inspire a character in his children, which will plant their feet in the paths of virtue, even, if in later age, they find him out. Let then the home be the one place, where the



reign of truth is absolute. If they persecute you with criticisms of the very Bible, be true, even if the heavens fall. Do not try and convince him, that Abraham did not tell a lie, when you know that he did, nor suggest that the wild woman Jael, had an inspiration for an act of assassination. Forms may die and systems may change, but the truth is safe to live, if we dare trust to it. The stars in their courses fought against the false interpretations of the monks and demolished them, but true goodness came out of the struggle, washed and purified for a greater triumph. The Church of the future will be all the better for a race of believers in the truth, even if many a year's foliage of the young plants of the centuries fall and change into mould-food for its growth.

II. But again and finally: the boy wants in his home, what only can be found there, the education of his chivalry for woman. For all sound boys, from ten to twenty, there is no company on the broad earth like his mother and sisters. The poet, Young, says, that:

“ At thirty man suspects himself a fool ;  
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan.”

This is partly a libel, and partly a fact. It is certain that up to that time he is not in the native exercise of his cooler reason. He is in the receptive state, and still unbalanced. The Jewish priests began their work, as men, at thirty, though they were priests, by inheritance, up to that time. Certainly before that period the character for life, in the matter of

the relation of the sexes, is formed. It is said that the age of chivalry is past. So it is claimed that the age of faith is over. So the same doubters might stand in the woods on this March day and declare that the age of the trees was past. He does not see a green leaf anywhere. The winds howl through bare branches and the buds are all hid away where the frost put them safely in God's keeping last October. The dry forms of last year's growth rattle underneath the naked branches, and the sky is leaden and prosaic. "Great Pan is dead." But it is all a lie. The spring is on us now. The gnomes are at work under every foot of ground now, and the young are in their spring. The character of a people and of their laws and religion are things which do not die in changing. And I may say, that nothing in all the range of our ideas is more important, as the laws or the religion of any people, than this thing which men once called chivalry,—the faiths of men and women in each other's truth, courtesy, and chastity. What if the knight, in his quest for adventures of righting the wrongs of the fair and weak, at last developed into Don Quixote and euphuists of the Tudor reigns, and became offensive in Chesterfields and other coxcombs of Burke's day—they did what, would God some power might do for us—they roused the world to a juster view of the purity of the religion of Christ than belonged to the ascetics and monks, in their lazy hives. Our mechanical progress in all the arts of social comfort, needs and will have the re-assertion of the same

principles which inspired the songs of Spenser, and drove the Puritans to come out of the corrupt world of the Stuarts, to plant a purer vine on these shores. There is a time of life when a sound idea and a true faith in woman, is as essential to a man's honor and health of soul—well, say as in anything else—in priests, preachers or dogmas. “There is a generation,” saith Solomon, “that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. A generation pure in their own eyes, and yet not washed from their filthiness.” From such, good Lord, deliver us! In the first and critical time of life, the Sunday-school teacher may reason in vain: the Church may warn to no purpose; it is not the vocation of either to ensure success—the real lesson is read at home. The combination of the real and the poetic there, the balance of love and familiarity which it affords, is the fountain of healthy life, to compact the character of these young plants, grown up in their youth. The problem of life in everything is to rule the passions, by the spirit. In early youth, the spirit rules by the affections. Therefore the home is the first church, that is generally necessary to salvation, in this world at least. God will provide for the prodigals, if they repent. Has he made no provision for those who stay at home? Christ came to call sinners: what does he for Timothy, who was not a publican, nor in its usual sense, a sinner? It is for men to think of these things, to accept the Church and purify it, if it is in error, that it may move in the plane of their natural duties to

their children. It is the one question of the hour, to find where the difficulty is that the young men are the last to come into the Church. If it is in the Church, let us make it right there. If it is in our ideas of the religion of our homes, let us take a better view of them.



## XII.

### DAUGHTERS IN THE HOME.

*"That our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."*—PSALM cxliv. 12.

PRAYER-BOOK VERSION.—*"That our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple."*

VULGATE.—*"Filiæ eorum compositæ; circumornatæ ut similitudo templi."*

LXX.—ὡς ὁμοιομα ναου.

HEBREW.—*Hakeel. הָכֵל (Temple-palace).*



THE word *polished*, is given in the margin as *cut*, i.e., carved. Probably, as there is no record of any polished pillars in the temples about Palestine, or in the land of Egypt, with which alone David could have had any knowledge, and the temple of Solomon was not then in existence, it is better to read the word, as *carved*. There was an intimate connection between the rites of worship of the ancient temples, and the caryatides, or corner pillars, which symbolized certain ideas, which lay underneath the mysterious doctrines of Way of Life. The face of the sphynx, which often guarded and silently kept that Way, in the temple-worship of Egypt, was often a calm female face, looking with wide-open eyes over the desert sands, as if waiting for the coming of the One who was to

solve the riddle in her keeping. Or if we think of the Psalm as written by some author later than the time of Solomon, which is quite possible, then the reference would be natural to the two pillars, which were carved by the cunning hand of the architect of the temple, Hiram of Tyre. It is related of him: "And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and he called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and he called the name thereof Boaz. And upon the top of the pillars was lily-work: so was the work of the pillars finished." It is known that these pillars were made for ornament and symbol only, as they supported no part of the building. It seems to me, to be suggested at least by the narrative, that they were the work of the man Hiram, rather than of Solomon.

Josephus finds fault with Solomon for permitting the figures of the cherubim to be woven in the veils of the hangings of the Holy Place, as if it were a violation of the law of Moses, which forbade any figure whatever to be used in divine service. It is altogether possible, that this allowance of art, in these two particulars, may be traced to the Tyrian workman. If so, it is to be attributed to the sense of true art. No cut or carved stone work could be permitted in or on the solid stones of the building. The veils, it seems, might be, in the opinion of Solomon, woven with the one figure of the sphynx or cherubim, which had been transferred from the gate of Eden and eter-

nalized in religious culture, in every known temple of his day. So while all the columns which actually supported the temple of a jealous God were severely simple, he seems to have permitted the widow's son to leave this personal mark of his poetic sense and art behind him. Two pillars of molten brass, of exquisite finish, and profound suggestiveness, were allowed to stand out in the porch; as if to testify in all coming time against the exclusive bigotry of an elected people. They were the sign-manual of the pagan architect of the stately building. They were his claim, and the claim of all uncovenanted nations in him, to rights in that house of prayer, which the architect of the True Temple "not of this building," should yet establish and set on sure foundations. They mutely told of it as "the house of prayer for all people;" and whenever perverted from that end, then becoming the "den of thieves." Abarbinel, the Jewish scholar, conjectures that they typified the Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire that went before the tribes in the desert, and signified the Divine Providence, as always over the place where Jehovah at last placed His name. If so, then it is a beautiful thought, in the course of the after development of that providence, that they owed them to the skill of a pagan, who claimed a part in the mercy of the Hebrew's God. Jachin represented the cloud, and Boaz, the fire or light: the former protecting all true worshippers by day from the solar heat, the other, by night, from stumbling in the dark. It is

plain that Hiram exhausted his skill in the finish of them. And if the allusion of the text is supposed to be to them, it gives us a thought as to the proper education of the virgin-life of a nation, which is most striking and expressive. The writer has prayed that the young men may be as plants of vigorous growth, which have been made strong and hardy by their education. They appear to have grown up in the open air. They are supposed to be able to take the assaults of the storms and the beating of the tempests, and only rooted themselves the deeper the wilder they blew. His words of them signify largeness and fulness of vigorous growth. In all semi-civilized nations, the need of muscular vigor could well be the subject of religious meditation. But on the turn of his pen he brings before us the ideal of womanly perfection, and while seizing the most beautiful thing known to him as his model, he finds it in the porch of the temple. Yea, (if I am correct, in my fancy, as to the relation of it to Hiram,) in that religious cultivation and tenderness of the sex, which poets and evangelists are supposed to delight to honor. To be earnest, in sensitive convictions, is natural to her. We look to her

“For a waking dream made good,  
For an ideal understood,  
For a Christian womanhood.

For a marvellous gift to cull  
From our common life and dull  
Whatsoe’er is beautiful.”\*

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\* Whittier.



We look to her to be the medium of that tenderness which keeps open the catholicity of that creed, whose highest assertion is that God is love. It is the prize of her high calling. It is a creed which the intellect is the last to reach; the heart, the first.

One word more of explanation. The one reading of the text, as you notice, is the corners of a *palace*; the other, of a *temple*. They are the same. In the ancient times, the king was somehow divine. His house was, *ipso facto*, a temple. The two ideas meet in the word used in the Hebrew, *the hakeel*, the palace-temple. The Tabernacle of Jehovah was called so. It was the palace where the king of the tribes dwelt; the temple of their covenant God. So in the symbolizing of the temple, by the body of man, which runs through the Bible, the object of female culture has its place in the polished corners of the court, where the two spells of Jachin and Boaz, Light and Truth, secure the favor of the Divine Providence, and keep for man the way of life. They are not to be desired, "as the young plants grown up in their youth." They are not valued for their muscle, or mannishness of any sort. Whether they are equal or in any way superior or inferior, is not alluded to. They are not the same. They do not come into the same line of thought in the mind of the sacred writers. We reflect on the figure of the Psalm—whether the lovely caryatides, as seen in the corners of the temple or palace, or the two highly ornamented pillars of Hiram standing in the

porch of the sternly plain edifice of Solomon—and the religious aspiration for their proper cultivation becomes poetic, in spite of us. As we cultivate in them the ideal of their capacities, the tenderness of piety, the gentleness of sympathy, the chaste whiteness of soul, the lofty aspirations which belong to them, the yearnings of that moral courage that begets in them the grandest results of patience and hope in darkness; in a word, that higher life, which shows one of them, at times, wasted away to a skeleton, with two-thirds of the mortal dust sifted out in the fiery trial of consumption; and in its place, the gleamings of the spiritual body of the resurrection, almost shining through;—as we do this, they reward us. They stand for us in the porch of every temple, and religious abstractions become the reality of a reasonable and holy hope.

I have seen a woman lie down to await the coming of the surgeon, who, as it proved, only opened for her the gate of death, with this feeling superior to all others: "If I could be assured, that by bearing the agonies of this disease, I could prolong my life for only three years, that I might see this grandchild grow to where I could safely leave him, I could not dare to meet this horrible operation: but the physicians assure me that I cannot, and I do it for him." And she did it, as coolly as if it were only a deed of pleasure; and she died, as bravely as any martyr. If there be no truth in religion, what a fool she was; and what fools men are, to ever attempt to disturb the faith which would

deprive them of her consolations and themselves of such devotion. And if there be any truth in the religion which we profess, then it has taken its shading and color of sentiment from the sex which is seen to be capable of such heroism. Surely, the fact is significant, that its first promise of a possible reconciliation with God, was addressed to woman; and that that way required the interposition of the Deity, to begin anew from her alone the race of the sons of God.

It was, then, to no chance form of expression: that our daughters should be as the carved pillars of the temple. There is a religious idea inseparable to the right education of the female mind. Men may arrogate to themselves the right to refine the intellectual speculations of the religious sense, and to defend the specific doctrines which express the oracles of God; but the interests of pure and undefiled religion are committed to the finer senses of the heart, and the sensibilities of those natures which can distance all speculations, by the grace of their delicate constitutions. We do not look on the Farnese Hercules to think of the realities of the world of souls. We do not hang delighted over the Moses of Michael Angelo to dream of the spiritual triumphs of the spirit over the things of sense. They are well, in their way. But it is the way of strength, of energy and firmness in restraining the savage and wild portions of our common nature. Among men we go to the Beloved Disciple, who saw the things of the inner heart of

Christ, and of the Paradise of God ; and who received in charge from Christ the care of his mother, and no less of the Church. The scenes of the cross, that draw us now most strongly to divine things, as if it were the New Temple not made with hands, certainly has the two pillars of Jachin and Boaz, in the presence of the virgin and her associates, through all that gloomy day, when His disciples had forsaken Him and fled. It seems to me that the text is true to nature in its having involved in the metaphor the two ideas, that the education of our daughters demands the recognition of the sense of beauty, and the instinct of religion. As we think of the two pillars in the temple porch, the two thoughts come up of themselves ; of their artistic beauty, and of their religious use. So :

I. The home should aim to rear its daughters by the rules of a sacred art, to the standard of the beautiful. It may shock some Christian to hear that there is an acknowledged standard of beauty, which religion cannot safely neglect. But we who expend so much on the cultivation of the arts of religion, cannot be troubled at any such news. I hear some one murmuring to himself, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel." To all of which I say a devout Amen. It is the perversion of the instincts of truth, to exhaust the sense of the beautiful on the body alone. If the female has the power to excite in the minds of men the ideas of a diviner



quality of soul, and she spend all her energies on the adornment of the person, it is a horrible perversion. It is the worst form of irreligion. It is like the Church of Laodicea, which lost the duty of showing Christ, in the display of wealth and respectability. But is there no use for a farther study in this same text of the old Jew, St. Peter? "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." It is to be observed, that he is exhorting them all the while to religion as a beauty. It is as an ornament, that he would have them love it. Thus the "holy women of old adorned themselves." The Quakers have curiously exemplified the whole subject. They adorn a plain dress by the beauty of their lives; and testify to a fact, which does not demand a philosopher nor a prophet to declare; that if they do it, they give to the plainest silk and the closest hat, all the splendors of gold and silver in the eyes of men. Our fashions of dress, in my time, have been sufficiently hideous to startle an African Fan. But a few days familiarity with the most outre, and the wearer is thought of, and not the disguise. If the world declares ornaments of gold unfashionable, it passes a ban on the metal. It might be questioned, if in any such case it would not be the proper mortification of believers, to wear it. It is the purest folly to rest long in the idea that St. Peter is any authority to Christian women as to the matter of the style of dress. As to its spirit, whether it shall ex-

press the intellect of a butterfly or of a saintly woman, who has a place in the temple of her God, who has a mission to her race, to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour, and win others to things that are lovely and of good report, he has spoken like a man of God and a sensible man, in warning them as to the ornament of the soul rather than the body.

It is the object of a true home to educate this sense of beauty ; this

“ hearts ease  
Of congenial sympathies.”

It is just as much the duty of parents to do it, as it is their duty to raise their sons to be strong and healthy citizens. We are practising compulsory education in the things of arithmetic and geography ; would it not be the duty of the State, to prevent the families of its citizens from mutilating their sons, and making them cripples ? The State is ordained of God, just as much as any Bishop is. If it is, it has the duty to call on all for strong men, for its uses ; to train all to work, and mind their own business in peace, and to be sturdy soldiers in the time of war. So the State, if we go no higher, is bound to ask for pure and worthy women ; women preserved to their own stations and of good health and true lives, to adorn their stations. The daughters of Israel, who had been trembling for weeks, at the news of the terrific giant, in Ephes-dammim, must gather to welcome the return of the young Bethlehemite with dances and

songs, and they must be worthy of such a duty, in order to make it a fitting reward to him.

Now home educates this sense of life-beauty, this refined woman-thought; this "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." It shows itself, not only in the dress, but in the whole daily life. It is a sense of moral graces, of which the whole outer life is the inevitable expression. It is involved in the very thought of a woman. Find one who does not have it, and the instinct recoils from her at once. Inspect the crowds of girls who cross the South Ferry of a morning before eight o'clock, and the want of cleanliness, the coarse display of tawdry ornaments and the bold looks and loud voices are all in keeping, and by no means a pleasant sight. It is not an accident, that these things go together. It is not an accident that the refined woman is instinct with a keen perception of her duties, in preserving the true standard of all matters of form. I hesitate not to say, that if the female sex had not, for the last hundred years, put the invincible barrier of their instinct as to beauty of forms, in true things, that this American race would in mere wantonness of a fancied spiritualness, be to-day relapsing into the rudeness of the Turks.

Home is the school for developing the æsthetic character. I mean, *æsthetic*, in the best sense of moral beauty and force. And my duty is done, if I can persuade you that it ought to do this very thing. You may teach your daughters to dress, act and

speak, by the best models, with a general notion that it is the proper thing for society ; that it is the fair thing to do ; that it may improve their prospects in the race of fashion ; that it reflects discredit on you to seem to neglect it. But I claim a higher sense of duty than any such selfish and earthly considerations as these. It is the religious use of a home of Christians, that it should plant the emotional life of the sensitive child-natures on the impregnable basis of instinctive truth. It is the beauty of good people that they be trained from the first dawn of reason, to act by the inviolable laws of things lovely and of good report, so that they become *gentle*, whether men or women, by a distinction which all gladly and admiringly admit on sight. When that man, Hiram of Tyre, moulded those pillars, Jachin and Boaz, he claimed the right of superior genius, to do it. He did not go out in the by-ways to take the popular vote, and ask of the wayfarer the privilege to attempt the highest form of the beautiful that the law allowed. He drew his inspiration from nature ; and while not trenching on the rights of men to be as unlovely as neglect and indifference might make them, he asserted the power of the beautiful, as a fitting tribute to the worship of the Lord of hosts. He felt, with Solomon, that it was well, that "the king's daughter should be all glorious within, and her clothing of wrought gold, that she might be brought to the king in raiment of needle-work, with gladness and rejoicing." Religion needs and can make use of every moral force. It is



one of the greatest of moral forces, the instinctive power of the refined mind, to act right, and to exemplify truth in the very way of self-poise, to do things that others do, but with a grace that adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. If this was the chivalry that adorned the aristocracies of the old world; if the sneer is levelled at us, that we are shoddy in manners and tastes; it is time that we asserted the power of a better religion and a purer standard of national taste. Let us acknowledge the power of these graces, and then cultivate them. The girls of a family are its precious trust. They are committed to the parents to be moulded, by the delicate methods of moral and religious education, that they may be something the better for their Christian parentage. A profession of religion cannot more atone, in this world, for a bad taste, that leaves us a coarse, indelicate subject, than it can for a dishonest character or a vulgar believer. Let the rights of all men be unquestioned. The duties of the thinking to be all that may exalt the common crowd, are beyond dispute. All the finer graces of character are personified, for our understanding, by the female form and life.

The old covenant, was the "Virgin Daughter of Judah;" the new is best known as the Bride of Christ. Almost all the very vocables of grace of the languages, are in the feminine, by an infallible law. Now I maintain, that no man's conception of any truth goes higher than the facts in his knowl-

edge. If his mother and sisters are coarse and untrue, false in dress and unfaithful to the finer instincts, he suffers a loss. And if the whole womanhood of a place is so, the manners of the entire population suffer; even if the preacher have the genius of Jonathan Edwards. Religion becomes unlovely. It is as if one should cover up a faultless statue with dust and cobwebs, and claim to do it for the glory of God. In my judgment, the strongest power of purity in common life, which no sort of eloquent exposition can equal, and no scientific detail of evil issues can atone for, is concealed in the due regard for the might and wholesome influences of beauty, as in things seen, so above all the rest, in the manners and graces which reveal the unseen things of the soul.

What is called public corruption begins in the loss of faith in things lovely and of good report; things which assert themselves, not so much by words as by the attractions of living factors. As to special rules of educating girls to this higher thought of their mission in life, I have not the time to do it now, nor is it my thought to do more than contest the fancy that it is a Christian thing to neglect it at home. The skilful gardener cultivates the various flowers of different climates by rules which he learns from experience. Only persuade him that it is not his duty to put all alike out into the frosty nights of January, and expect the peach-pit and the passion flower to be alike benefitted by the exposure. He will learn

the rest for himself. There is an instinct in all worthy men, to protect women. It is based on the idea, that the protection not only is necessary, but that it is its own sure reward.

II. Finally, this figure of the text, *like polished corners of the temple*,—if it means no more, certainly shows us that the mind of the inspired author of the Psalm somehow confused the thoughts of comely virgins and the temple of the Lord. I think that the same thing runs through all language. I could prove, if it were questioned, that it underlies all religious revelation of the most attractive things about God. But I draw now only a single practical inference; that the beauty of holiness is somehow intimately connected with the right home education of our girls. Jachin and Boaz reared their fair beauty, carved all over, until the simple Hebrew language of that age seems to have been too meagre to tell us of it, as it struck the imagination of the venerable scribe who described the structure of the temple.

They were placed just where the priests must always see them, while engaged in their bloody rites. The high-priest must go between them, whenever he prepared to offer atonement for the sins of the people. If they symbolized the pillar of cloud and fire, or the Divine Providence, whose secret place was behind the veils, they won him to a passing recognition of the fact, that there was a beauty of life, which was acceptable to that awful Being. If they signified the Light and Truth, worn on the temple's bosom as the

same were worn on his own, on the breastplate of his Urim and Thummim, by which he became the keeper of the oracles of God; then they taught him how true, and pure and beautiful must be the nation's heart, if he would offer acceptably the sacrifices of righteousness for his people.

So, in my way of looking at life, the daughters of Christian homes are like these polished corners of the spiritual temple; they are inextricably involved in the best thoughts of things divine. Whether the sexes are equal or not, I do not care to know, any more than I care to know which God loves best, an oak tree or a Victoria lily. If you are making ships or gun carriages, give me the firm-knit and tough timber of the live oak. If it is to pause and wonder what God made things beautiful for, why it is that it has power over men since old Homer compacted the Greek nation into one tremendous force, by the majesty of song, and will continue to rule us, till the perfected consummation of sainted humanity shall appear coming down out of heaven, "as a bride adorned for her husband," then I ask for the lily. It was certainly not a woman who died on the cross: but it was not the son of a man, either. I see standing around the cross, one man only of the twelve disciples, and all the women apparently who followed Christ from Galilee. One pronounced disciple, a friend of the high-priest, and two timid, uncommitted followers, safe because of previous timidity, and two bands of women, are last at the cross and earliest at the



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grave. One thing I do know, that the same education of a true home will make out of the sons and daughters entirely different modes of grace. It has been so. It will be so to the end. If ever there was a community of Christians in which one had the right to give warnings on this theme, it is this. Let us accept the intimation of the soul, and the history of all religions, and value the tenderness and protect the innocence of woman. Let us pray that our sons may grow up like plants, grown large in a happy youth, with healthy muscle, and honest, tough timber of manly character; and not desire any competition, on that line, of our daughters; content if they become lovely and religious; fit to stand in the temple porches of God.

### XIII.

## EDUCATION OF HOME.

*"Thy children like olive branches around thy table."*—PSALM cxxviii. 3.

VERY man has two kinds of knowledge; that which he takes cognizance of and prides himself on, as something which reflects honor on him: and then, and quite distinct from the other, that which he absorbs from the unspoken experience of life. Of this he is apt to take little notice. He is not ready to recognize in it the same complacent reflex praises of himself. When he is able to quote the writings of learned men, or set others right as to the latitudes of things, he is touched to the pleased quick, with the refreshing sense of what it is to be among the better educated. All the while he is acting by an unconscious set of motives, which he has in part inherited as the legacy of his predecessors, and partly acquired from the atmosphere in which he has been reared. This is the education which makes the man. It is not so compulsory as to be final and irresistible, but it is of the greatest influence and of the deepest line-engraving of any. You may write the palimpsests of intention on the pages of the soul, in later years, but the

original characters are never quite effaced in this world. It is due to this law, that we often see the old man who has wandered from the home of his childhood and spent his entire life in some other country, returning, in imagination, as he grows weaker with age, to the scenes of that period of his life, and recollecting the incidents of the first years of life with startling freshness; while the more important events of the day pass by him unnoticed, or evanescent. And sometimes it happens that a re-formed character, that is one formed first under evil, and then re-formed under more respectable circumstances, that such a character appears to wear quite well, as long as the masculine vigor is occupied with the business and distractions of the world, but becomes rusty and ragged, in age. The masker has often staid too long at the ball. The mask is seen to slip from his heavy hand, and the face below is not so lovely as one would wish. In this age, when the prodigal son is so often the ideal saint—the Apollo of the pulpit—it is questionable whether this experience of characters that have been formed normally, according to the laws of nature, and then re-formed on the models of theory, is not so much the rule as to make such remarks offensive. After that unhappy young man had recovered the shock of pleasure at the welcome of his old father, and had settled down to the monotony of home, what think you was his experience of the penalties of reformation of character? True, before his luckless journey,

he had been troubled, as so many of the young are always, with the restlessness of curiosity, the surmisings of what might be the taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; but what was that to the sense of passions half-burned out, which the memory was busy kindling with the sparks of that earthly wisdom, which is sensual and devilish. Scenes of putrid pleasure, in which all things had been foul and degrading, came back to pollute his peace. The forms of evil obtruded themselves between him and his best affections. The rites of Baal instilled doubts into his faith in the Lord God of His fathers, and the obscene orgies of Astarte left their burning marks on his daily consciousness, as the fiery lava marks its fatal course on the valleys of the volcano. When will men learn that there are some things which it is a vast folly to know? That the scene of Eden is being repeated constantly around them; and men and women are wandering out of the sacred gates of home, to find the world a desert before them? Even the worst men in the world, if they be at all thoughtful, are seen to become indignant at the crime of robbing a soul of its innocence, and to detest the keen and prompt knowledge of the corrupt ways of the world, which they themselves practice, and by which they suffer. It is a remarkable fact that St. James, the settled pastor of one place, has occasion to emphasize the distinction between these two kinds of knowledge. The evidences of it came daily before his eye. He says: "This wisdom," that is that



of envying and strife, and the like, "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. The wisdom which descendeth from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." Ch. iii. 15-18.

This heavenly wisdom is not learned from books nor Sunday-schools; nor pulpits. It descendeth from above, and the sacramental sources of it are home-influences, primarily and chiefly. It was taught in the older system of revelation, by the parent. I need not go again through the common school laws of Moses, as they lie in the Pentateuch. He elected the father as the pedagogue of each family, without appeal. I only remind you that the Israelites were under the same laws when Paul and Timothy were being educated, and for some generation or more afterwards. If so, then nothing can be farther from their intentions, in anything that they may have said than the thought of undermining this influence. The Bible is the word of God. I doubt it not, no, not for a moment. But it was intended to align the various duties of life, not to transcend them. Neither it nor the pulpit can give any one the wisdom which descendeth from above. Or if they could, it would not be from above in their cases, but from the book or from the desk. Now the words "descended from above" are emphatic. They mean something. They are opposed to the wisdom

which is earthly and natural ; that which is acquired, and perverted. There is a virgin bloom in innocence, which is the sweetest and holiest thing that is known to man, in his experience. The fortitude of the saint and martyr is grander and more direct in its teaching of the majesty of a will to conquer evil. But the innocence of the unsunned soul which simply knows no evil, is the lingering odor of Eden. It is a revelation to itself. It is the reminder of the first dream of man, and it suggests the strongest hope of some life in which it is to be renewed as the law and constant beatitude. This old Eden story is told over and over again, in every Christian home. The walls of the father's house are the mountains which fence the little ones in from the world. There run the four rivers, on whose shores are bdellium and gold, where no evil can enter, or cannot long linger. There the coarsest toys and the plainest blocks are adorned with the bright beams of the infantile fancy, and the poorest room becomes populous with changing company. There, long before the mysteries of the Arabic or Roman alphabet torment the immature mind, the young Adamite has been studying from the models before him in daily life. Looks and tones, gestures and deeds have been his primer. There has been in him too the secret magnetic force of filial descent. The books that he studies are live things to him. He reads them by an untaught faculty, that teaches the whole animal creation to imitate : that educates the young beaver to the

finest achievements of engineering, and tells the titmouse how to calculate the diameter of an inverted dome. Only on the higher scale of his moral nature he is busy, weighing whether honesty pays; whether it is true that it is Godlike to chain the tiger temper. He is thoughtful, as to the meaning of little scenes of hypocrisy, that have gone on under his eye. True! he does not formulate any propositions or suggest critical enthymemes, but he does a deal of thinking, none the less. He receives on a virgin soul, the impressions that strike deep and last long. He is largely plastic, like soft clay, on which the fowls of heaven and earth are making their tracks, before it hardens and keeps them hidden for better or for worse. He is then, too, more of the animal than the philosopher. A paramount animalism and a dormant reasoning power then—we call on the noblest natures to spare him, and join to guard him from the assaults of the evil influences of the corrupt world. It is a part of that wonderful element of the Christian dream of the God of revelation, in which it differs totally from all the schemes of human devising, that Christ stands by the cradle of every infant, to warn nurse and mother to reverence the innocence and recognize the awful presence of the cherubim of the divine presence as there to guard them from rudeness. Your angel and mine are ministering spirits, engaged still in the work of helping us somewhere on the track between this and the better world: "Their angels do always stand in the

presence of the Father in heaven," ever ready to appeal against the wrong doer. And lest we should not be moved to fear this sort of sacrilege, Jesus stands near them, to move us to pity them and reverence them as his own nearest exemplars, saying to us: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The way of life was pointed out to the grown up men who stood about Him, as lying near the cradle of infancy, namely, the unlearning all their earthly wisdom; the surrender of their low dreams of worldly progress, and being converted again to little children, that they might read over in the light of His spirit the great truths which descend from above, and are pure and peaceable.

The Psalmist seems to me to have been reaching out in the right direction, as he caught up this figure of the olive branches as the proper metaphor for children. It would be easy to run the metaphor to excess, for it is full of meaning in various ways. The olive tree was the chief of the useful trees of Palestine. It has in it much that bears a likeness to the human character. It has been, in all ages, the tree nearest to the oriental man. It is a species that in that warm climate, changes its condition after the first two or three years, something as man does from youth to manhood. It runs up its early shoots with vigorousness and rapidity, in long lithe half succulent saplings, that distance the softer woods. Its first period gives no sign of the second. It is soft, easily hurt, bending to the finger, and rushing on



with an exuberance of force, fresh, shining, smooth and brightly green. Then come other conditions, slower, harder, slowly developing, working in secret its hard and enduring fibre, till the older tree stands by the road side, gray-green, dusty, gnarled and tough, rough with many a broken spinous growth, and apparently perpetual. A few old stumpy, solitary patriarchs, with their stems soaked with oil, are believed to be still existing, where eighteen centuries ago, the Paschal moon looked through them to light the sorrow of the Son of Man. The Scriptures constantly seek in the olive, the similitudes of our human affairs. But the one meaning of it almost always comes uppermost, that it is a symbol of peace between man and his Maker.

It was the leaf of this tree, which, brought in the mouth of the dove to the prisoners in the ark, told them that a new world was emerging out of the old, to be their home, under new conditions. The old and evil world of the races who had forgotten God was swept away. From the four homes set up by those who came out of the ark, the world was again to become populous, with a better race. In all the nations that descended from them, this plant became dear to them with substantial benefits and religious associations. It told of fertility, of the great blessing of water, of prosperity and plenty, and of mercy and religious peace. What the rainbow afterwards was in the sky, the olive tree was on the ground, the symbol of covenant and religious obligation. Solomon constructed

certain portions of the temple of this wood, evidently with an eye to its moral significance. And under its shade at last the great passion of our Redemption was wrought out by the Redeemer of men. David has once likened the sainted state to the "olive tree planted in the courts of the house of God;" and in the same spirit, here pronounces the blessing of the man who feareth the Lord, that he shall eat the labor of his hands; his wife, like the fruitful vine by the walls of his house, and his "children like olive branches round about his table."

Two thoughts come into my own mind, in this connection, and I present them for your consideration.

I. That children are to be religiously considered, and educated in the faith that they are a gift that cometh of the Lord.

II. That the dangers that beset them are to be best guarded against by such a mode of care.

I. We are in the way of hearing an immense amount of exhortation, *to have faith*. Faith is, in some sides of it, the one want of the age. The clergy are calling for religious faith in the various creeds of the many sects into which they are divided. Now, in some respects, the want is real. There are faiths that are essential to life, whether here or in any other world that we can conceive of as before us. But there are faiths, also, which we need not suffer to live at any great cost of labor or feeling. Men are too busy in keeping life in the latter class of beliefs, to notice or preserve the vitality of the

former class. Now, as I read the Bible, if there is one vital characteristic about the gospel of Christ as to the kind of faith that is essential to true life before God, it is that which cometh unto man, *not from without, but from within*. The era in which we are placed is emphatically that of the Spirit. "It is expedient for you that I go away, . . . that the Spirit may come unto you." If Christ could not stay, and teach the forms of doctrine by the hearing of the ear, but must, in the order of Divine Providence, give way to the new mode of communicating vital truth, directly by the spirit of God, then the wisdom that cometh down from heaven is the wisdom that is vital. I know that the Quakers have run this to an extreme. And it is the supreme of folly to say it, and in the next breath to claim that it communicates the element of infallibility to the teacher, who himself violates it in the act of offering to teach. But I go this far: the faith that we need is faith in those elements of character which come to us in the relations of life, in truth of conduct, in honesty, in God-fearingness cultivated at the mother's knee, in the balance and poise of the whole man, such as the Catechism of this Church means to demand, and I believe can accomplish, or I would not serve her. In other words: I believe that the spirit of God will communicate to a true man, who has been educated in the fear of the Lord in a Christian home, the infallibility that he needs, and the only infallibility that he does need, the instinct to do right: the poise of character which will make him a real man,

give him the *impeti* of a real man. He may err in the harmonies of metaphysicians : he may not always be reducible to rules : he may be troublesome, as was his Lord, to the communities of earth ; but if he look to have the wisdom which he needs, not to make him a teacher of others, but an actor on the stage of time, to lay up a foundation of truth of feeling, that shall be a rock of defence to him, he will have it.

Now this wisdom and this faith, namely, this unconscious bone and fibre, meat and muscle portion of character, it is the work of home to accomplish. And it can ordinarily accomplish it only as we regard it as the religious work of home primarily to do it. If we unfortunately turn it over to the sect, or leave it to the Sunday-school ; if we adopt the notion that it can be safely left to the changes of manhood, and accept the theory of the prodigal son as the model of Christian experience, then we take from home its divine meanings and transfer them to those who have no such commission. The seeds of character are laid up in the fallow soil before the spring days are over. The future man and woman are moulded morally long before they are out of your leading strings. In the college in which they graduated, you are faculty and trustees, by a divine right. God gave the first promise to the command to honor parents. That promise was a home in the land of Canaan, and long life to enjoy it ; yea, and it had in it the song of a life forever and ever. And God gave it thus, because the relation of you and



them and that life here and hereafter is intrinsic, is the norm of society: is the law of moral gravitation; is the spiritual magnetism, in the power of which His will can be read and fulfilled. If I bring you a clerk, and say to you, "This young man has been an idle fellow and a thief; he has been brought up in the prisons of the city; he has been in every kind of pickle; but he has reformed. He is a true believer; he talks beautifully on the sin of dishonesty, and has an amount of the wisdom of experience, that is rarely acquired." Would you undertake him? Not as a clerk. But they are building churches out of him all the time, and wondering, when he fails to be as good as he knows how to be, *e diverso*, from his acquaintance with the evil of society. Now it is possible that he might be finally honest, and it is possible that the purest training may fail. But all men recognize that this is the law of exception and the reserve of the free will in which God created us. My opinion is that we need only to look at this thing, and dare to accept the conclusions of the reason. They are the inferences as well of inspiration; that home is the seat of the truth of character, and the fountain from which the State and the Church must draw their strength. The olive-branches round the table, are olive-branches, or signs of covenant. Let them grow in the nursery of home, with the assurance of the provisions of the love of the God who gave them. The rite of infant baptism, as it is practised among us in this Church, is, as you know, displeasing

to the majority of sectarians. Some would reject it altogether, and many repudiate it as having the element of the new birth concealed in its sacred waters. But it, and the doctrine of it, are a protest against the falsehoods of the day. It asserts the sacredness of home. It gives to the mother the conviction that she is a priestess of the spiritual temple; that she has been to the altar and offered for her purification, and taken home to her bosom, the infant whom religion has consecrated as a trust of the Saviour of men. Her olive-branch is planted by her in the courts of the house of God. Hers, and no less his. We all believe two things. 1, That we are born in sin; and 2, That a merciful God must accept us by some right of his religion, that we may not grow up into its fatal inheritance; and we must consecrate our homes, and harmonize them with the religion of our souls, or both will suffer.

II. The dangers that beset our children are best guarded against, by a religious estimation of them. The word *religion* is used in the Bible only once, and then it means something else. That once, it translates, *Judaismos*: or the Jewish system of life and doctrine. In all other cases, the book, which is taken up with almost nothing else, always looks at the results of the unmentioned secret character of the man. In the first Testament, the synonyme is righteousness, that is, obedience to law. In the last, it is divided between faith and love, because the law now is the life of Christ. Now, in the first case, if we are

Jews; then the duty is plain, that the infant life of the family is just as truly religious as the adult life. In the home of an Israelite, the boy who is born into it is by the express care of the highest authority interlaced with all the promises. He is to be circumcised the eighth day, because God accepted Abraham, and did it because he saw that Abraham would build his system of religious thought on the fidelities of the father.

Now, if we are Christians, are we worse off than the Israelites? Or did God, after founding the first covenant on the example of Abraham, then go back and rob it of its meaning, in the New Covenant? Now then, taking the chances, if I may be allowed to say so: taking the two modes of thought about your children: one, of the Anabaptists, that there is no place for them in the spiritual fold, and no sense or use in their baptism: and the other, that of the Catholic world, that they are equally the care of Christ, with the whole bench of Bishops, and have fewer sins to confess, not being adults; I claim that if it be a calculation of probabilities only, it is the plain fact, that the safest thing is to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, just as if we believed that they could be acceptable to the Creator. True, they cannot talk doctrine: though I notice by the paper, that an infant of eight years, who reports that she experienced religion at two years, is just now engaged in explaining her emotions and spiritual struggles in children's prayer meetings over

the river: but ordinarily, the infant is not graduated into doctrinal consistency. They are not religious by believing in faith, or in platforms of this and that faith; or if so, God help us here, where no two men believe anything alike. But they are religious by believing in God directly, so unmistakably, that they do not doubt of it. The eye does not see, by seeing the air, or the water in the air. When it sees the most of the water in the air, it sees the least of the celestial luminaries, for they disappear in the fog and rain. Now a young olive sprout can develop sap, just as surely as an old tree. It does not develop the same sort of oily sap as the oldster. It is better it should not. It is not asked to. But it can do its work in its way just as truly as the other.

Now I claim that the Bible recognizes this distinction in men. The glory of a young man is—not his wisdom, or his views of the rationale of society—but his strength. “I write unto young men, because ye are strong.” The glory of the gray head is wisdom at the need of others; of the young man, silence and modesty. So there is a place for our children in the courts of the house of God. They are with us always. Put it thus. Suppose a mother, and her infant of two months, to die together suddenly by an accident. Does any one doubt that they go together into Paradise? If so, then, unless when the child begins to talk, an angel comes and wipes off God’s mark from it, it is always with us.

It is here that I would leave the matter, that the



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education of home teach this one fact, until it cannot be misunderstood ; till all the children feel that the whole man is appealed to, and as in after years, so from the beginning, they are religious beings, and always in covenant with God ; through their homes first, and then, and in the same line, through their Church. If any people dare to make this real in daily life, they must expect the opposition of many doctrinal oracles ; and the blessing of God, in finding that his promise is true, that their children will be like olive-branches round their tables, whispering of strength and of peace with a covenant-keeping God.

## XIV.

### THE DUTIES OF MASTERS.

*"And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that your master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with him."*—EPHES. vi. 9.



OME read this text : " Knowing that your master and theirs is in heaven ; " which is certainly so, whether it is put in by St. Paul or not. In other words, the duties of masters of servants or employees of all descriptions, are to be regulated by the consciousness of the superior, that he is to give an account of his trust at last, to one who will take no note of our earthly sophistries, nor be deluded by any inconsistency of faculty, in the giving to all the final adjustments of exact justice. This precept of the apostle is conceived in the spirit of a grand and universal justice. It is intrinsically inspired ; that is, it is moulded by that wisdom which the man Paul, except as he drew it from the Old Testament scriptures modified by the spirit of Christ, certainly could not have framed it as he has done out of any earthly code of domestic morals.

In the ages of the past it has been always the

Magna Charta of the oppressed. It has modified their condition, and disarmed the severities of their task-masters. It has given life to the efforts of reformers, and lent its vigor to their sermons, as they took the side of the weak against the strong. When it was written, it was not the decision of the wisdom of the world. It was by no means the teaching of the laws of the pagan nations of the world. The Roman and Greek laws placed the slave under the absolute control of the owner, as it placed the cattle. The Lord of the household was authorized to slay the servant, if in his judgment the crime required it. And the laws of Moses in this regard partook more of the ancient than of the modern spirit. They were harsh, at the best. It was only a slow process, that changed the old severity, and after innumerable struggles, step by step, and often with a step in the rear, at last established the present ideas of human rights. It could hardly have been otherwise. The ancient custom of enslaving enemies—and often the only choice seemed to lie between slaying or enslaving them—made it necessary to endow the enslaver with the power of life and death. The African race are the last to suffer from slavery. They are docile, and on the whole patient in servitude. The disadvantages of it are not so prominent in their cases, because of their virtues and vices. Slavery restrained them from some of the latter, and the former inclined them to endurance of its hardships. But when men of the other races were enslaved by the

accidents of war, it was often like capturing tigers and leopards; the slave was unhappy, and the subjugator not to be envied. Add to this fact the great pride of race of the Jew, and you will agree with me, that the precept of this "Hebrew of the Hebrews" was either a happy accident of his pen, or it came from that providence which has made itself prominent in the progress of the human race from the beginning. Note how skilfully it is worded. He begins with laying down the duty of the *doulois*, *i. e.*, the slaves.

The Bishop of Lincoln, an Englishman, and in no way inclined to indulgence of slavery, thus comments on this word: "*Slaves, or bondmen*—not to be confounded in their condition with the household servants of Christian nations in later days, who have been raised by the gospel from the condition of *douloi* to that of freemen and brethren in Christ." And another English commentator remarks: "The apostle does not interfere with any established relations, however morally and politically wrong, but only enjoins the discharge of duties which the very persons themselves recognized." A Jew never would have enjoined them: and an enthusiast would not have recognized the relations.

He tells the slaves their duties. The masters liked that. The slaves being inferior, could not well have objected to it. But on those duties which both acknowledged as belonging to the political state, he grafted, by a turn of the pen, the great precept of



exact justice on the Christian scheme of faith. 'Slaves, obey your masters, not by compulsion, not on the minimum of a jealous eye-service, not as you must: but freely, as to Christ: knowing that all good life belongs to the Lord to notice and reward: and masters, do the same things to them, and on the same principle; moderating threatening, knowing that ye have a Master in heaven, whose eye is single, and whose compensations are infallible.' Their temptation is that of eye-service, the sins of the weak, to dodge and shirk, to sneak and become careless of the master's property, to fawn and flatter, and thus deceive and cheat; to waste and idle, and degenerate as laborers, and degrade themselves as Christians, and become the source of incessant vexation to themselves and to all about them. The temptation of the master is revealed in the words—"forbearing threatening," or "moderating it." As the margin reads, as if it could not be altogether forborne, but only restrained. As some years ago it was claimed on the sea, that a captain of sailing vessels could not manage a ship in a storm without swearing at the sailors, so it would have been found among the morals of a slave-planting code, that it was impossible to make a crop, without threatening. And why should it not be true, however bad the threatening may be? For if you cut the nerve of honest labor, and change a man into a mere machine or drudge, to have no personal interest in the results of his toil, why should he care for the honorable motives of the industrious

freeman? Pervert the manhood of any one, and you must appeal to the animal motives in him. He must be *made* to work; and if you cannot trust to his generous motives for it, you must feel the temptation to descend to the lower motives; the inferior police of the threat; and then to make the threat last to the scourge and the prison. Threatening is not wrong in itself. The namby-pamby Christianity which offers to rule the affairs of men by the code of Eli, whose ineffectual: "Nay, my sons," when it was his duty to have put them to death, but what he would have stopped their crimes, is as false to nature as it is a travesty of the spirit of Christ. But the habit of threatening as the one motive power of a home, is the confession of weakness and folly; and the gate through which many an evil and curse will creep in. Take two families as an illustration. In one the parent appeals, as a rule, to the reason of the children, and complements their undeveloped reason by a wise and vigorous discipline, on occasion; just as he trusts their bodies generally to the dictates of healthy food and right exercise, and administers medicine prudently, when for any cause it is required. Take another, where the parent vibrates between the Eli-croak of "nay, my sons," and the equally impotent threatening of a petty tyranny. Why do you wonder if children do not grow amiable or lovely under this latter sort of training. It is like giving them candy and medicine for food, and grieving that they are sickly.

But my thought, to-day, is of the servants of our homes, and our duty towards them. I love the spirit of this text, and need not go beyond it for my theme.

I. It is a Christian relation. Conscience, a future judgment, come into it. It is not a matter of mere dollars and cents. It is not to be had for money, in its true blessing to any of us. There are exceptions, I know, where the employer is intent only on the money value of the service; where a master imagines that when he has paid the bill, he has discharged the whole task; and when the servant rises to the spirit of St. Paul, and nobly carries off the prize of Christian charity, and graces an ungracious contract with the touch of service done "as unto the Lord." But the law of compensation usually comes into play, sooner or later, in every thing. You buy a human helper, as you would a horse, and you will sooner or later find those who contract with you on your own level. They return you mule-labor for your wages. With what measure ye mete, it is always being measured to you again. Let me say here that I do not think that all men are equal, by any means, except as to the rights before the courts, both here and in eternity. I believe in strong distinctions; and in usages to express them. Grant a man all his rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness: then grant that before God there is no respect of persons; then, after all that, comes in the large margin of distinctions, that are just as true and valid

as the most spiritual facts of the Creed. "One star differeth from another star in glory: so also is it in the resurrection of the dead;" and no less so is it, before that time. There is no such thing as equality. It is not in nature. No two spears of grass are exactly alike. No two birds are the same. There are aristocrats among the very sparrows, who chirp defiance at the birds of low degree who offer to domesticate themselves near them. Grant that before God there is no distinction of persons. Before us there *are*—we are not God, and before us there must be. None administer His judgment. Yea! in the most democratic town of republican New-England, and in the families of the most benevolent deacon of Congregationalism, which is the garrulous foster-mother of human rights, I will find you characters, whose virtues are built on a personal and family pride, as evident and accepted as that of the old French nobility. I claim a strong distinction between master and servant. There are ranks of order. The servant in the kitchen, or the porter down the cellar, has not your tastes and opportunities. He may be a better man than you are, and in the realities of character, he may be more of a gentleman. The man who rules two hundred men has chances of development beyond any one of the two hundred. The officer has a daily education in the higher uses of faculty, than his soldiers or his sailors. Your maid may have the refinements of a purer nature than you have; and the more delicate undeveloped tastes of a



lady. That is all the worse for you. She ought not to have them. It is your loss that she does. You have two ways to meet her; one, to copy her, on the sly, and try to excite her delicacy for your ignorance of the purer rights of your relation, till you at least equal her; or you are compelled to make the money relation tell to the utmost, as long as you can. But ordinarily, I take it that they who have the duties of the harder menial work of the family, are not the chiefs and examples in it of delicacy and refinement; and that any theory that is built on such a sophism is false and dangerous. My experience is that success, as a rule, follows work in the right direction. Lotteries disturb the balance of trade very slightly in this country. Sundry sudden fortunes and happy chances cannot blind us to the fact that work and money, and leisure and education, are usually to each other as cause and effect. The possession of money implies the presence of servants to do the coarser kinds of labor. The man who is industrious and rises above the coarser necessity, has more time and the same industry to do better things, and to improve his tastes and manners; and he has a right to it; and so he has a right ordinarily to the honor which it brings with thinking men. This will seem offensive to some, perhaps. It is none the less true. It is necessary to say it, for it is the loss of this solid conviction that has invaded and damaged our peace in our families, more than any one other thing. Either the mistress attempts to yield to her maids,

and not assert herself, as mistress, by right of her position and superior womanhood; or she tries the doubtful game of putting them down, resenting their impertinence and checking their bolder ways, till change and rebellion are the order of the household. The servant rules the mistress, and the disorder travels upward through the members, till the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint; and a hotel seems to be the only Zoar out of the domestic Sodom. Part of the evil belongs to the times: to the crude notions of what is true liberty, and part to the cheapness of lands about us. In a new country, where land is cheap, the wages of labor must be high. But that is not all. We bid to people to accept charity, rather than work, and so part of it is due to the frightful fact, that in Brooklyn we *made forty thousand paupers* last year, to become the ready material of some future mob, at no distant day either. Ten thousand families were helped last winter by the public charities of this city—I take it from documents—to say nothing of those who were restrained by pride to confine their appeals to private citizens. And that in a city where domestic labor is paid at a higher rate than in any other country in the world. I take it for granted that ten thousand of them might have been employed at reasonable wages, and the care of the rest made tolerable by that one reduction of our expenditures. We provide hot-houses for our own troubles. We err on both sides, in giving to encourage idleness; and then, in cutting off the

classes who are virtuous enough to work for us, from our sympathies. The time has come that the charity question has to be reconsidered, because of the evils it is bringing on us all as citizens.

But with that I am not now dealing. I hold it a sound remark to be insisted on, that the servanthood of your families is not to be looked at as a matter of money merely. You cannot buy it. It is something better than gold or silver can compass. It is not to be left in the mind of the servant girl for a moment that you value her at fifteen dollars a month, and no more. Look at it. A girl of sixteen lands here from Ireland or Germany. She has been the victim of proud kings and bigotted priests, you may say. It is all stuff. She is a girl, and is no victim. What does she know or care for all that? She has been the child of honest poor parentage, of simple hard-working people, rude, but honest. She has had a home of the poorest thatch and scantiest food. She is willing to work. You employ her, just as you would a horse or a sewing machine. She is of another religion from yours. By the way, there is only one religion in a true home. There is only one religion spoken of in the Greek Testament. There are forms and sects enough, but there is only one piety. She is a Romanist in every fibre of her girl nature; she believes every word that the priest tells her, and generally she is fortunate, in her lonely kitchen, left to her ignorance, that she does; for Protestantism hardly goes on missions into our

kitchens. That is quite too low work. It never tells in the papers. It makes no annual reports. It pays no agents. You buy her labor, and cut her off from all sympathy. Perhaps the baby or younger child steals down into her department and wakes in her girl heart the old feelings, which she once knew before she touched the shores of the "land of the free and the home of the brave." Her religion is always spoken of scornfully, and she must keep silent. She is made to feel that there is between her and you 'a gulf *fixed*,' and no angel or saint ever can cross it, to carry her a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. Possibly her wages are grudgingly paid: wages that perhaps are sent across the waters by her, to the shieling at home, to keep life in an old father or mother, or to allow some other one of the family to come and see how these Christians here love one another. Do you say that this is a hard picture? I answer that I wish it were not every word true to life. We have been often thrilled by the eloquence of the men who told of the horrors of buying black beings. We detest the merchandise of girls in marriage, sold for money at the altar. But who thinks it worth his while to avenge the wrongs of the kitchen girls? And then, when they are driven by cold neglect to turn and assert their womanhood against such tyranny, there rises the shriek of ingratitude.

The Irish are said to be ungrateful. I do not believe a word of it. It is a libel on the bravest and



kindest race of the English speaking tongue on the earth. Like all the Celtic and Gaelic nations, they are as mobile, sensitive and inflammatory as the Galatians before them. They are extremists, and often blunderers, but they are easily led by their affections, and are open and ready to the strongest friendships, and capable of the grandest self-denials. Before we substantiate the charge of ingratitude against them, let us take note of what they are to be grateful for. Who can be grateful to be bought for so much a month, and reminded of it at every turn, day and night? Who is to be held recreant at the bar of human tenderness, if they are cognizant of no family tie, under your roof? All duties are in a measure relative; both sides must conspire. I take it as a thing that cannot be disputed, that in all these relations of our homes, the human nature in us will and does make itself felt. We theorize religiously and politically, and think that the world moves on the "spinning grooves" of the theory. It does not. The tides of common life run on below our fine machinery; and those tides feel the influences of the luminaries far over our heads. In my own family, for example, the first visible influence of the proclamation of freedom to the slaves of the South, was the intense disgust of our dear old black nurse, that any one should think that she had anything to do with being free. Neither she nor any of the family admitted any power on earth to touch the sacred tie that bound us together. We may call over the

names of things as we will. The facts are the powers, not the names. If the girl who works for you, is left to feel that she is cut off from your family life, by the circumstance of her religion, her Celtic blood and the humbleness of her toil, and is valued as just so much wages, and is kept by you merely as a convenience, you may thank her religion and her race that she is as good to you as she is. I would not be, either by my religion or race.

Suppose we try the other plan. She is a member of your family life. If you have children, she is destined to affect them. It may be for good and it can be for great evil. In some things she and the children are on a level: she gets at them, in some things more than you. What hungry schoolboy, but cultivates the cook? She has a right to be acknowledged as a member of the family. She takes a share of its life. She is under its roof, and takes her share in its dangers of sickness or unhappy accident. There are duties to her that you cannot shirk. The first of these is friendliness, sympathy and culture. She is ignorant; think for her. She is prejudiced. Prevent them.

There is a poor woman in Fleet Alley. You go to her and sympathize in her troubles—why not with her? We complain of the influence of the priests. It grows less and less over men all the time, because they can assert themselves, and make friends outside, and need it less than they did in the old world. It grows stronger over women, only because they are

left unaided by the sympathy of their fellows. The misery of the Roman Church in this country is that there is so little use for priests in practical things. In the old countries it is different. There they are the friends of the oppressed. Here that class fails to appear. When the oppression is lifted, the need so far ceases. *Again, let their religious notions alone.* You have not had the forming of these notions. You cannot root out these notions half so well by reasoning as by example. In my judgment the time has about come to check this blind abuse of any class of our fellow citizens, because of their old-world ideas. It is largely the result of old-world policies, with which we have just nothing to do. There are thousands of unprotected Irish girls, who owe their virtues as good daughters and virtuous women to this old-time training, who could not change without rooting up much of the wheat of character with the tares.

If all the priests of Brooklyn should come to us to-morrow, and say: "We are going back to Italy, and we leave you the care of these members of our flocks, to keep them where we leave them." For one, I should be sadly troubled as to what to do with them. Men talk of changing religions as one changes a garment. It is not so. Any religiousness that amounts to much is not so easily laid aside. The Church a man follows may be wrong. What is the virtue one has gained by it? Oatmeal is very indifferent food; but it makes a braw man of a Scotchman.

For one doubtful advice that a priest gives to a servant, it is inevitable, if he has common sense and decency, that he must give her a dozen that are reasonable and helpful.

We may feel often that it could be done better, but it is doubtful if we could do it. There are disadvantages, it may be, in the present system, but the question is for us, do we make the best of it? Do we treat those who serve us constantly, as human with us; as members of the same Christ, and going up with us to give evidence at the bar of God of our common home-life? The piety which shines brighter in the eyes of the maid-servant or the porter than it may in the columns of the advertising sheet, is, in my judgment, the truest orthodoxy and the soundest Protestantism. I cannot, for the life of me, believe that the book which has in it the Epistle of St. James, leaves any reasonable doubt on that subject. I know a man who, giving an order to a number of Irish navvies, to go down into a pit filled with mephitic gas, found that they were afraid to do it. He said at once, "I do not give you an order to do what I am afraid to do." He was drawn three times out of the pit in an exhausted state, before the object was gained; but all those men believed in him, from that time, as much as I do. There is probably more of the disgust at manual labor prevalent just now in the minds of the rising generation than there has been heretofore,—a sense that the true lady must not soil her dainty hands with the offices of the menial. It



is a bad sign. It is a dangerous sign. It is unpatriotic. We may swell the air with the songs of the country, and point to the mechanical triumphs of the past century in vain, if the spirit of our ancestors is wanting. The woman who cannot take hold and keep the household moving in an even groove, because she is afraid of sacrificing her delicacy, is fit to be the wife of the defaulter, and the mother of pettifoggers. Often the man's sin appears flagrant before the public. But the woman's sin and inefficiency are the real causes of it. He stole, that she might keep up her style.

Finally, then, to bring these remarks to an end : let us, in the home, assert the inequality of the conditions, by showing the authority of a better piety ; the aristocracy of superior character ; the domestic reign of a queenly refinement and diligence in thinking for the good of all, that commands obedience by its intrinsic majesty. One needs only to hear a strain of sweet music, to recognize its claim to win on us ; and there is a harmony of character which no ruder mind is at liberty to disregard. The very heart and conscience of the rude will be engaged on its side. They will give it its power, by simply seeing and feeling its beauty. To disregard it will be known to be a sin against right and truth. It is the only authority worth having on earth. If Christ commanded His most excellent followers to set their ambition on being the servants of the Christian household, it is surely not too much to expect of private homes,

that they honor labor with their sympathy, and not despise those who are the servants of all. If we now need any one advice more than another, it is this: that we drop this mercenary idea of servitude, that it is regulated only by the wages and is incapable of higher considerations. It would be, next, to look at the fundamentals of religion, and seek to increase them in the family. Those fundamentals are to keep the commandments. And those commands are to love one another. In this matter of home piety, I would write one single line of the poet Sterling's over the door of every servant's hall:

"Love teacheth more than doctrine can."

The homes which are mixed of people of the various sects of dogma, are undoing the evil of the sects all the time. We go to a church and hear a man demonstrate that there is only one Church, and only one way to get the smile of the Father of Lights. We swell with gratitude that we are among the select few, and our ways past criticism. We shiver at the terrors of the inquisition, and detest the shamelessness of the confessional. But at home, some household drudge, who believes in the Pope, if she knows what that means, and who goes to the confessional regularly, is faithful, kindly and honest, in spite of it. Somehow the thunders of the rhetorician pass by like heat lightning and strike nowhere. The great Church grows on in ways past finding out, and the little ones are gradually assimilated to it in spite of themselves.

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The great converter is a holy life : and a holy life is the home life. It shines best where the outer motives are least in play—in the quiet scenes where the real heart comes out and shows itself. May God help us there. May he help us to do to our servants the same things “that we should wish them to do to us ;” forbearing the threatening of a petty tyranny ; remembering that they and we have a Master in heaven, in whose final arbitrament there is to be no respect of persons, and no regard for caste or class.

## XV.

### THE UNMARRIED IN OUR HOMES.

*"But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried, careth for the things that are of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and spirit; but she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."*—I COR. vii. 32-34.



So long ago as the time of St. Paul, this difference between a married man or woman and an unmarried one, has been the legitimate subject of religious thought; and however the announcement of the thought may be a matter of surprise, in this generation, it remains one of vital interest in any scheme that looks to the regulation of our Christian homes. Low wit and ungodly scoffing have made the subject suspicious to the handling of the pulpit. It is all the worse for the wit and the profane unbelief, which always serves the cause of evil best when it can, by any arts, frighten us away from subjects of importance. The cause of evil is the cause of the profane against the lofty ideals of true life. The temptation which besets a young



man or woman lies oftener in the light laugh of the scornful, and the soft witticism that only hesitates a sneer, than in the direct attacks of the reason and conscience. It is so with this theme, that the unmarried are always a portion of our homes, whether they be male or female. They are there for good. It is possible to invest them with the atmosphere of ridicule, as the coarse world has done, or to realize the nobler spirit of Christianity, and confess a higher ideal of the divine life, which is possible to them. It is true that the married woman must be anxious, often over-anxious about the things of this world. Her ideal of the true and beautiful, in the sacred things of the spirit, must often be contaminated by the rude toils of her household. She seeks to please her husband, and properly : but he is not one always whose pleasing is a healthy process for her. His tastes may be bad and low at the best, and the surest way to please him, may not be the way of the purest things of which she is capable. If all men were wise and good, then the problems of life would be simplified. But they are not. The best of them are imperfect. The ideal of the highest virtue, is that of patience with the necessary evils of the disordered world. "Let patience have her perfect work," says the Apostle, "that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing." The poor household drudge, who is letting patience have the perfecting work, may be conscious that the bloom is all the time being worn off her soul by the necessary contact with the coarse-

ness and lowness of an unequal yoke. Her salvation is to be worked out through much tribulation; and her peace be gained in ways past understanding. It is always true, that in any Christian community, and perhaps, in communities as they become more Christian, that a class will be found whose duty it becomes, by the ordination of Providence, to stand out from the settled ranks of society and bear witness to the fact that there is such a thing as "caring for the things of the Lord, that one may be holy both in body and spirit." It may be that our own community has need of this class; a class that has no need of one peculiar dress, or set mode of speaking, to demonstrate to the common people the reality of the things that are 'of the Lord;' the pureness of life, which makes the eternal world real to men; the high respect for the things lovely and of good report, which teaches us all the reality of them. We have been so busy in straining all the things in the Bible to the destruction of the dogmas of the Roman Catholics, that we have given up some things which are a real loss. It is to the detriment of Protestantism, that it is visibly compelled to return on some of its tracks, and confess that it may be possible to protest too much, and give up, in the zeal of the partizan, some of the good things of the faith. The ideal of a chaste womanhood and a virgin manhood, that willingly gives itself to works of charity in the love of the pure and in pity to the burdened among men, is something which we cannot surrender, with-

out loss. Happiness is not the only end of living. Duty is its end as well. Work is its end as well. Lot looked to the plain of Sodom, "and lo! it was well watered, and as the garden of the Lord." It was the new Eden, and so Lot chose it. The Lots always choose it. The race of the easy is prolific, and found settled in all the watercourses. They grow up like a green bay tree. Their roots are well watered. They point out their blessings, as the glory of gods and men. They have no problems of life, save to eat, drink and be merry. The problems of society are not for them. They never calculate the angle of the slippery places where their feet are set. They have no questionings about the eye of a needle, and how much they can squeeze through its restricted aperture. Grant the fact of plenty to eat and drink, and a fair measure of peace by land and sea; and what need of problems? "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," and the announcement is the end of moral philosophy.

It is just here that your Elijahs come in, and pour contempt on your Sodoms and Samarias of plenty and ease. They show you the fires rolling below; the sensuality of the corrupt heart of men: the fact written all over history, from Sodom and Babylon down to the last winter in Washington, that men are never so much in danger from all the evils of the world and the devil combined, as they are from themselves, when they can have all things their own

way. The race of the "Do as you likes," as Charles Kingsley has shown, is near of kin to the degenerate gorilla, and needs only some thousands of years of uninterrupted causation to descend visibly to their cousins-german. None of us can bear prosperity and not be injured by too much of it. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Lot goes to Sodom, and the grass is green, and the people are all for having the least of the problems of society, and the best times seem to come on him. But did you ever note the fact, that Lot staid there long enough to demonstrate that the defilements of the pleasure-loving Sodomites had penetrated into his entire family, and condemned them to ever-censured infamy. Meanwhile Abraham, with an inextinguishable hunger in his heart, is wandering around the wadies of the hills. Pasturage is scanty, never more than enough. But the air is pure, and visions of the day of Christ frame themselves in the heavens over him, and he is seen declaring, by what he did, that he sought a country, and if he had been mindful of that one from whence he came out, he might have returned. But he did not return, and somehow, you and I are glad that he did not. We catch from him a vision of a city that hath foundations, and is not Lot's unhappy city, that had none. So, and in this line of thought, I propose to do you what good I may. I claim that there are duties in the Christian Church and the Christian home, that make it a legitimate subject of the pulpit to insist on them. There are visions that can be wrought out in



the sacred retreats of home by the unmarried members of our families, which may be fraught with doctrines and duties to all.

It is singular that in all the ancient cities of Pagan Europe, an image of a virgin was the palladium of the national safety. Troy could not fall till the image of Pallas had been stolen by Ulysses and Diomedes. And imperial Rome fell only when corruption had levelled her virtues in the mire, and the vestal fire had died out of the hearts of her sons. So in the ages of the Christian amelioration of men, the same law holds. Half the moulding influences of the darker ages have taken shape from the feminine story of the virgin-mother of Jesus. Gradually the power of the maternal love seemed to push out the love of the father of Christ, and men learned to give her the first throne, in a quaternion of divinities. When I stated, in good faith, that in these sermons about Christian homes, I had something to say on this theme, I could feel the delicate start, as if it were too dangerous ground for comment. It remains to be seen, if it is or no.

I. The text recognizes two things: that there are these classes: and that there is work for all in the great scheme of the Church of God.

Now it is singular, that this instinct for idealizing the virgin life, appears everywhere, except in the Old Testament. It was an outside influence among the Jews altogether. The record of Naomi and Ruth was quite in their way of thought. Their prophets,

who denied themselves everything of ordinary ease, were not unmarried by rule. This was due to the one promise, of a Messiah to be born of their blood. The sad romantic story of the daughter of Jephthah, was never idealized by their sages or poets. And their toleration of polygamy deprived them of the tendency to romance, which their Pagan neighbors manifested so freely. Therefore when the Christian religion came, forbidding polygamy and restoring the relations of home-life to their natural condition, it became the necessity of the times that the Apostles must testify to the law of the Christian Church on this matter. St. Paul did it in few and simple terms. They suited his age, as rules of conduct. They were afterwards perverted by the superstition of men. And they needed the revision of the Protestant reformation, to rid us of the ill effects of that superstition. In Corinth, the city of the great central road of mercantile business of the world, where the religions of the world met on common ground, and were valued more as practical than as theoretical, the marriage relation became the subject of discussion. He made it the theme of this Epistle, and left it on the soundest basis for all time. Men realizing as the fact of every day, that life is uncertain and subject to changes and shocks, without regard to the moral fitness of things, could estimate his zeal for the great idea of the Gospel, that all men should use the world as not abusing it: that the zealous believer in things eternal should learn to look through the things of the passing day

as after all unreal, in the light of eternity. He told them circumcision is nothing, and yet to a Jew circumcision was the test rite of his national life; and uncircumcision was nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the calling or condition in which he was called: if a servant, then Christ's freedman: if free, then Christ's servant, bought with the inestimable price of a love that made all manner of self-denial an easy duty. Then with a reserve, which he makes emphatic, he expressly rejects any claim to inspiration in the matter, and gives his advice. It is emphatic, as advice, but, if we believe him, it is not the commandment of God. What was it? It was good for the present necessity, that is, the pressure of the persecutions of the prevalent religions of the ungodly world, that all men and women should, as far as possible, remain in the state of life in which they were made Christians. This advice was eminently sound and practical. More than that, it was merciful and Christian. It neither recommends celibacy nor condemns it. He speaks *ad rem*, to the times. Change the times, and the advice fails, save by way of instance and precedent. In the course of his remarks he states one principle, which is always true. It is as true if marriage were the law of the Church and State, as it is if it should be deprived by monkish rulers and ascetics. The married must expect to be more or less engrossed in the cares of their families, and so far chained down to

the sterner realities of passing life. On the opposite side, the unmarried have opportunity, and with duty, to be mindful of the things of the Lord. I say, the recognition of this fact is eminently the gist of this text. But unfortunately the history of the Church has been the record of the infirmity of men. What was for some ages the sound advice of the Apostle, in time became the iron law of sacerdotal monarchy. Then, in turn, our reformers have been always inclined to go to the farthest extreme, and reject one of the true powers of the Church. It is only in this age, that such men as Pastor Fliedner in Germany, and others of less note, in other nations, have begun to insist on some recognition of the fact, that there are great powers for good, in utilizing the forces of the unmarried. True, so far, this has been mainly done in the interest of works of charity and education. But it cannot be stayed on any one line of action. It is only necessary once to fight out the old Reformation prejudices, which were well enough, or at least excusable for their times, and women in single life will, in their own way, re-assert themselves in the ideal bride of Christ. It is as true now as ever, that what has been, is that that will be. There is nothing new under the sun; and in human nature, nothing instinctive to it, ever perishes. "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit." "Aye," says the monk, "in body, therefore the estate of marriage is relatively unclean, and incompatible with the



highest Christian life." St. Paul does not say anything of the sort. He is not open to any such inference. He asserts in another place the contrary. But there is an opportunity given to the virgin soul, that it may claim these words of this Apostle as of importance to itself.

I. By freedom from care. The text points it out. There is the absence of "the cares for the things of the world." I hesitate not to say, that the degeneracy of theological learning now, is largely due to the fact, that the spirit of the learned universities of the ages past is lost. The fountains of true learning in matters of progress in society; the steady working out of the greater questions of the ages, always require a large body of men, who are strangers to the cares and the oppositions of the busy world. In these things, we are living from hand to mouth. I grant that there are geniuses who can dispense with the common rules of little men; but heaven save us from a civilization, where such geniuses shall be the rule. Milton may draw with the finger of the highest art the scene of Eden, and steal away our hearts with the music of the innocent love of that first perfect pair. But Milton was a better poet than a husband. He raved on the subject of his unhappy wife, like a blind Samson at his Delilah. He would have corrupted the laws of England, if he had been listened to.

Now, the highest of all studies is the truth as it is in Jesus, a pure faultless life. It has this advantage,

to begin with, that it was the form of the life of Christ. I do not for a moment give in to the notion, that Christ would have been any the less a Saviour, if he had been a married man. But, as a fact, he was not. So the example which one attempts to copy as a student of the sacred sciences, is to him normal. He comes to it by first intention. It may be a problem yet, whether men and women are so weak, that they cannot undertake to attempt the high regions of this sacred art, unless they are taught to believe in the medieval superstitions about the mystic primacy of celibacy before God, and its popularity among the angels. But while I remember that Christ praised those who for the kingdom of heaven's sake accepted the single life by choice, I also recall the incident, that St. Paul condemned the incipient attempts of his age in this direction as the doctrines of devils. But dropping the temptations of the sacerdotal classes,—who always interpret the things of the Lord to mean the things which benefit them peculiarly, either with wealth or power, or at least with tender sympathy and conscience-keeping of willing disciples, the soft and charming temptation of this age,—there is a devotion of a single life to the things that God loves, which is as much a religious matter as the study of dogmatic divinity is to a preacher. As society is constituted now, it is much needed. Our girls are educated in an infinity of things which train their minds, for one that trains their hearts to learn self-poise and true self-assertion.

I have been asked many times, as if somehow it was the tone of these sermons, if I think it the destiny of a woman, her chief object, to be married. I answer, profanely considered, worldlily, after the judgment of the fashion of the world, that passeth away : yes. Is it doubtful ? The birds are made to fly, the fish to swim, men and women to marry and give in marriage, till the flood come and sweep them all away : and what then ? But there is a higher rule of thought and life, and in that it is the duty of man or woman to be true to themselves : to have in them that principle of self-esteem to put such questioners to the blush. Imagine some bright girl in Corinth, among the persecuted Christians there, hearing this advice of the blessed St. Paul, her spiritual father, and heeding it. Fancy her, if you please, either walking the paths of single working for Christ, among the sensual generation of that semi-civilized city, far into old age, a constant example of the beauty of holiness, like a light shining in a dark place ; a white-clad sister of Christ, giving up her yearnings as a woman, say, at the mistaken dictate of duty, and becoming loving, thoughtful and tender to all ; ever wandering metaphorically with the patriarchs, as one seeking a city and home in place of the one she has foregone here—has she lost anything ? Has the Church or the world lost anything through her mistake ? But change it. Fancy her, in tears and softest regrets, giving up her lover to-day, and to-morrow torn limb from limb by a

Nemæan lion in the Corinthian arena, and how is it then? Does she regret, as she looks up and sees the rider on the white horse appearing to her inspired vision, as she dies, the advice of the Apostle, who gave her no advice which he was not willing to follow? Here I venture to go back to my own experience, because it is quite in the way of our common life, and is possibly often realized by one and another of you.

Every man's life is moulded by the people he meets. If I am of any use to you in things relating to Godliness, it is only from the faculty or the courage to preach back at you what you are to me. It happened to me, and I consider it an infinite blessing that it did, and have always thanked God for it, to know, just at the time to be of the greatest use to me, when I was a boy at school, learning of Æneas and Dido and people of that ilk, to know and love with a boy's unsunned enthusiasm, a girl some half-dozen years my senior, and in every way my superior in genius, truth and moral character. I presume, as I recall it, my enthusiasm pleased her, and my needs called for her maidenly sympathy. She was marked, as it proved, for an early grave, by the scourge of New England. In due time, much to my disgust, she gave her heart to a worthy man, suited to her. Then came the struggle of her life, till she refused her lover, and calmly made herself ready to go up among the angels. It is a long time ago, and only an old man's story to you now. But the angels



never grow old. But I would willingly give up, to-day, all that my Greek or Hebrew professor did for me, rather than the recollections of her. The act of self-denial performed in a New England village; and with a spirit worthy of the martyrs, was an interpretation of Christian duty that I had never found in the classics. In my experiences of life since then, I have known many, both men and women, who interpret the same, and tell us the tenderness of the heart of Christ, in taking care that it should be left on record, that multitudinous rewards await those who at the call of honor, duty, or conscience give up the rewards of

“Isaac’s pure pleasures and a verdant home.”

II. And so, finally ; it is left to say a word of the duties of the Christians of single life in our homes. The first of all in my mind, is the duty of self poise. By this I mean that balance of inward character, which insures perfect self-command. How many restless and unsatisfied people there are in the Church. How many useless lives in the community—people who have nothing to make them unhappy, except themselves. They are restless because they are useless, or they think themselves so. Religion is generally esteemed to lie in certain religious things, in the Prayer-meeting, the Sunday-school class, the lecture in church or mission, or in some specified works of love or of self-denial. These are all of them important and not to be disregarded. They are the practical

sacraments, which greatly help on the salvation of many persons. But in my view, man is the religious thing, and not this or that work. All that you or I do may be very religious, and yet not come in the category of any of the sects. The high duty of the Christian is to make his life a continual example of goodness, and to make things that are true, real in the sight of the world.

The words of Peter to women were that they should have a life and conversation which should be eloquent of the power of the Divine in their souls. This is impossible if we are not satisfied with our lot in the changes and chances of the world. It may be that our lot is hard. I have seen people who seemed to have no interest in anything or in anybody about them ; but is it right, or wise, to give up in the race, and cultivate this style ? A sickly sentimentality is fain to repose on the lap of the family and settle down into mere inanity. In my judgment there is great danger in either the state of invalidism or of loneliness of condition, lest the sufferer may relapse into selfishness, and grow into the exacting temper of indifference to the call of real duties to others. Pity is sublime, and sympathy with the disappointed is excellent ; but either may be exaggerated into injurious qualities, and become anything rather than Christian graces. There is a duty for those who may be said to be able to lead their lives without carefulness. They, if Christian believers in the story of the Gospel, have a mission to men, that needs no long

journey to find pagans, for whom they may labor. It is still possible to realize the old story of the two patriarchs. Our homes need the prophetic spirit of those who have time to care for the things of the Lord; to see to it that Lot is not lost in the cares of Sodom, to carry the knowledge of their visions to him in the midst of his worldly cares, and as the text has it, strive to attain the power to be "holy in body and spirit." There are those who can do this and reconcile the perplexities of the homes, which are dear as they are happy, and dangerous as they tempt us to linger too long in their cares and pleasures. For this we need not go beyond our doors for the field of duty.

"The trivial round, the common task,  
Will furnish all we ought to ask :  
Room to deny ourselves ; a road  
To bring us daily nearer God."

## XVI.

### THE SICK IN OUR HOMES.

*"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."*—2 COR. i. 3, 4.



HAVE heretofore, in these discourses, looked mostly at our homes as they ought to be ; as the remains of the Eden which man lost by his sin : reminders, in this vale of tears, of an ideal happiness, that each one unconsciously claims as his birthright at the hands of the Father of all. The instinct of self-love, or I might say even of self-preservation, shows itself in the desperate energy that we exhibit in resisting the approaches of disease or persistent sorrow into their placid retreats. The graduation of sins in our minds is made on the basis of the detriment which is offered to them. Crimes against the eternal rule of right are often obscured by the deflection in this lower sphere. The commandments of the Decalogue are constantly perverted from the ideal of their original intention by the present dangers to our peace.



Evil which, in the view of pure spirits, and in the comparisons of a sound philosophy, is the denial of the divine sovereignty and departure from the standard of the supreme will of Him who knoweth all His works from the beginning, is constantly lost sight of, by the injury that is done now and here in the relations of society. We might ask even of the most Christian assembly: "Who begins to calculate the greater degree of sin and guilt, that lies in the breaking of the first law of the Decalogue, *the having no gods but one*, in its greater threatening of woe, when contrasted with the lesser evils of murder or adultery?" The former guilt is as a fountain, from which all other sins issue. But we mortals are engrossed in the single streams, which endanger our life and peace now. We leave the horrid fountain to the dreams of another life. Our best efforts are put forth to secure the spider's thread of this single life. We often forget the higher duties to Him who alone can make it either pure or tolerable.

But evil is the heritage of mankind. 'By sin came death,' and all that brings it on us. It is the glory of the Gospel of Christ, that He alone of all the teachers of religion, has laid the great laws of His Church in the deep foundations of this one question of human sorrow. It is the Church which has its one great sign in the uplifted cross. We can know nothing of its reality, until we are willing to know the significance of the doctrine of "Christ and Him crucified"—a perfect man enduring unmingled woe.

We are baptized into His death ; we rise again, as we consider Him who for our sakes became destitute of all things. The mystery of the great creed of His creating, is the victory over evil, by enduring it ; over sorrow, by rising on its dark wings to the peace that passes understanding, because it is given, not as the world promises it. The conquest of this early dream of youth, of sensuous delight, is the true philosophy : is the reward which is set before us as believers. The Cross is phosphoric. It shines the brightest in the darkest hours. The profoundest argument for the verity of our ideas of God, is at last the proof of the individual experience, as the believer finds that its realities advance in the exact proportion to the decadence of mere earthly comforts. As the garish light of the common day departs, the stars of the upper deep appear. Into the home where some Lazarus lies lost to earth, comes the Saviour, with the news of a sleep that defeats death and opens the gates of immortality. In every true experience the one end of practical religion is the alphabet of the cross ; the gradual conception of the lesson which Christ is engaged to teach His pupils ; namely, that it is established in the nature of this sinful world, that whom the Lord loveth He is bound by that love to chasten. The rule is inevitable. It is as natural to the higher life as the love of the fathers of our bodies, that they discipline us, by one common rule. It is in line of this acknowledged thought, that I would consider the duties of the sick

and wounded in mind or body, and the correlative duties towards them, in our homes.

I. And first, I wish to give the word *sick*, its widest meaning. There is sickness of the mind, and of the passions, yea, of the very appetites, as well as of the body. The advance of science is seen in nothing more than in the conviction that it is surely and steadily producing in the general mind, of the misfortunes which beset the wills of men. I visited Randall's Island on Friday, and after going the rounds of the work-shops, then stood in the hall, as the long lines of boys passed by me on the way to their dinner. Everything had been pleasant to my eye until then. The institution is an honor to the civilization of the age. It is the Christianity of the State set out in living characters. It is the last and best commentary on the text: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father." You see just how far a State has gotten on its way towards the great Church of the future. It is the municipal protest against the infidelity of natural selection and the expulsion of the weakest. It is the one achievement of the century, which cannot be sent on to Philadelphia, for it must be seen to be understood. It is the strongest argument against the morbid fear of the return of the tyranny of the priesthood. We, as a community, deliberately accept the fact of our degraded classes. We do not send them out to a penal settlement, and hug ourselves that we are a step in advance of the Brahmin, who plants his obsolete workers in the mud

of the sacred Ganges and disposes of the difficulty by this tender superstition. We do not induce them to emigrate to some incautious neighbor. We accept them. And it is a noble faith, with all its mistakes, that it is a duty to make the best of them. They look happy. They are at work suited for them. They were just then, as they passed me, on the one pursuit, in which we all are kin, on the way to dinner, with full anticipations and good appetites. But as they passed, some hundreds of them, picked up out of the streets; truants, either by choice or necessity; some having what we call politely, *friends*, and some poor waifs, who were better off having none, it was a gloomy picture to my eye. Such a collection of small skulls, of narrow temples, of low foreheads, and eyes dull with the prolepsis of idiocy and insanity in the distance, I have never dreamed of. The Asylums of the Insane are not a circumstance to it. It ought to be made a part of the scientific report of some society, to accurately report these facts.

We talk of the vice of poverty. I thought then of the *disease* of it. Scores of those boys, in the very shape of the skull, tell the sins of the great city, as they are seen by beings in the sky. They are not insane. They perhaps never will be. But they are the serfs of the future. They are to be the fathers of future lesser minds, till idiocy ends the story. Taking the word *dis-ease* in its original sense, they are the most dis-eased of all. Yet they are and must be our fellow voters and fellow workers in society.



We accept them. We suffer the evils of training them, in the faith of a grand advance of the great body of society. We are like an army. We take up the wounded and march on encumbered with them. I mused, as I stood there, on writing this sermon, and those boys together: and asked myself this startling question: What if St. James had been warden of that school, would he have said, as the thought came over him, that some were perverting the Christ-idea, and he wrote: "Pure religion and undefiled is this"? Just how would he now put it? What is the truest way of reducing his words now, into the living thought of to-day? Must we Christians of the nineteenth century accept the assertion that those few men, who knew only the barbarism of Jerusalem and Rome, be always the rulers of the literal forms of human thought and action?—the infallible directors of its spirit, they are by right. But while the faith was once for all delivered to the saints, did they not themselves prepare for its flexibility and adaptation to all the new phases of an advancing civilization and progress? In those narrow skulls and low foreheads is the stamp of an inevitable disease. Those boys can only make unfortunate men. There is a predestination as firm as that of the stern Calvin, in the phosphates that direct their brain matter, into the ways of gross and evil living. Their fathers have eaten sour grapes, in the slums of the metropolis, and their teeth are set on edge. Where is the responsibility for them? Some day one and another of

them will develope moral or mental insanity, and then the problem for him will be solved. What solves it for the one who always hovers on the edge, and never quite falls over? Has the infinite Father decreed them all to hell, ages ago? It would relieve the brain, if not the heart, to think it. They cannot rise to our standards, unless we recognize them as *diseased*, just as much as the lunatic and the lazar.

Now, what those boys are to the State, all manner of sick folk are to the home; *i. e.*, the problem by which to realize the Christ, as living here and now. There is a sentimental thought of Christ as living always, to keep up authority in Church castes. It has had a long popularity. The divine, as he engages in the act or ceremony of authority, claims, and I believe properly, Christ's promise to be with him. The claim is just. But it is a sentiment mostly, unless it goes farther and makes the presence a reality to be judged of by its results. The authoritative presence is to produce the substantial. The one is to the other as the theory of light, for instance, is to the substance of light. One tells that men have a right to see, ought to be allowed to see, ought to see; the other lets them see. All orthodoxy of belief is intended to produce the possibilities of action in the line of the things believed. You believe in the doctrine of vicarious suffering. Well! It is the standard of the faith, flying in mid-air, lighted by the bursting bombs of the battles of the night of the past. But

God makes it real. He puts you on a course of training of vicarious suffering, and where is your faith then? Ah! how you fight against it. How you struggle and murmur at the affliction, and go to the ground and hunt round to see where it sprang from.

There are no perfect Edens: there are no faultless homes. Facts tell us this much. The inspired word tells us the same. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." It is the same thought in another form. You are to accept your lot, your want and burden, your cross, as the best for you. I willingly grant that all men are to resist evil to themselves and their families to the bitter end, with all their might. It is inevitable and right to do so. It is an indolence of weakness to give up and moan, when we can do valorous help to anybody. But the sad color of an earthly stain will infect the fountain, guard it as we will. It is just there that Christian faith becomes the reality to each soul. Given a family, in which there is nothing but sensuous happiness, and there is danger in that one fact, to all the members of it. It was largely because of this fact and law, that the Saviour so often warned the rich of the dangers of wealth. It was the startling maxim of Father Abraham to Dives; not charging him with a single sin or crime: "Son! thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things." That was all—received them—loved them—lived for them, nothing more. Religion is the life of the soul, its openness to the things that are spiritual, pure, divine, eternal. But a man who

has his all now, in the perfection of happiness, his purple and fine linen and sumptuous fare; ah! can you or I fault him much, if he takes his ease in verdant Sodom, and forgets the fact that there are other things beyond and beneath his valley of Eden? Home, I claim, is the great original Church to us all. Here I teach you: there God is always teaching you. Here you listen to words, or to the hymns of the best thought of good men. There you stand face to face with facts. Here you can choose, there you cannot escape the teacher. Here, there may be error: there is none there. Here you worship with the assembly: there is the lonely closet, into which the Master takes you, and shuts to the door, and tells you of the ways of God the Father, how pitiful he is: how He sees the great sickness that is coming over your soul, and the medication which is to cure it.

The touch on so delicate a subject ought to be as tender and skilful as the hand of an angel. I know how one flinches at the thoughts which I hesitate to advance. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger meddleth not with its joy." I certainly do not mean to go a step beyond the help that the Gospel offers to give us in the troubles of home-life.

I. *Let us take trouble for granted.* The rich envy often the carelessness of the poor. The poor envy the state and conveniences of the rich. I have lived freely among all manner of men. I believe nothing more than I do this; that the circumstances do not make happiness. The human soul is the one greatest



thing in the circle of our knowledge ; it constantly makes its own fate ; it conquers circumstances. Give it health, (and its health is truth,) and it is its own arbiter of the outward world, so far as we can now see :

“ The soul is its own place, and of itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”

“ Man is born to trouble, as the sparks to fly upwards.” I know this was the wail of a terrible sufferer, and has a sound of gloom in it. But where lives the man who may not echo it? We, as democrats, with an idea that all men are somehow equal, and an indistinct notion of what that equality really is, are nervously occupied our lives long in concealing from ourselves and from others, the knowledge of facts in this direction. What tragedies of desperate struggle pass on the secret stage of the homes where men hide the fox that is gnawing at their vitals. How long a man and woman will torment themselves before they will confess to failure. And all manner of sickness, whether of mind or body, is so far, *failure*. We strive to build up a happy home, as we would have it. We wall it round and fill it with all that we think useful to make it the seat of refined bliss. We do it bravely and religiously. We, like the man in the parable, are just about to say, “Soul, take thine ease;” when some voice drops out of the clear sky, not in anger, to begin in us a training for some better fate than we have projected. Sickness, in some of its forms, enters

the sacred retreats, and the Divine opportunities begin to develope themselves before us. Say, for example, a man has been tried in the hard school of the daily fight of business, and all the time been gainer; that is, as he began poor and became successful; he became gradually a better man, only the dust of the street would get in and begrime his virtues. He was hard and suspicious of men. He held on to his success with a strong grip. He rolled himself up in a spinous coat of pride, and lost many of the softer ways of his kindlier nature. He had formed a scheme of life, not wrong, exactly, not offensive, perhaps, only selfish in the main, and unworthy one who is to be found among the sons of God in the Resurrection. Imagine one of us, forty miles above him, or better, one of his own family, in the rest of the blessed, looking down upon him. We try to solve the question of how to reach him, save him from himself and win him to a nobler cultivation. We see that if left to himself he must become narrowed and unworthy. We are to raise him. And the question is, *how?*

Christ answers it, by ordaining a minister of grace to him, in the form of some beloved child, or sister, some failing or defective member, who is infirm in some way, whose mind, or heart, or body is put to suffer, in some one of the long catalogue of diseases. Sorrow comes and takes a seat at his board. He is proud of intellect; the difficulty comes in the way of mental weakness. He is haughty above others;

the woe takes the shameful turn. He is lofty and looks down on common men ; lo ! before he knows it he is the pensioner of the pity of an ordinary mechanic, whom God has ordained to be the very messenger of goodness to him, and do for him what all his learned friends and rich friends cannot touch.

The threads of social law and interest run in a singular tangle in our society. We all need each other—strangely come to do it. The proudest man I have ever known, had a son, whose first career was enough to humble ten men like his sire. Then he took a turn and redeemed himself. We do not take too much for granted in believing that God is training us all, and all together. If so, the training is on some comprehensible rule. That rule is seen more than in anything else, in the sick of the home. And here I turn to the text in the two sides of: 1. The duties, or rather the position of the sick. 2. Then the like duties, or rather position of the rest of the household. In the text St. Paul thanked God ; and He dwells on the titles of His goodness, calling Him endearing names: *because He had helped* him to comfort others, by Himself having had previous need of comfort and received it, in His personal tribulation. He was able to comfort them which are in any trouble, “by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” This is a Christian rule. It is *the* Christian rule. It is the reality of the doctrine of the atonement. Without it, all the orthodoxies of the Church are as sounding brass.

It is the Cross made a verity. It is Christ at one's hearth-stone. The position of the one in trouble is sacred. Like all sacred things, it has two sides. In the Hebrew language, it is a fearful fact, that the words which belong to God, like *consecrated* or *blessed*, take two sides of themselves. Now, they mean the blessing, and again the devoting to woe. It indicates one meaning at the bottom, which is true to all the uses; namely, that all sacred things and opportunities are of this double species.

So is it with the sick. They may become anything but blessings to themselves, by selfishness. They sometimes lose all the advantages of their own trial. They become accustomed to the refined care of friends, and the generous attentions of the family, till they lose all sense of reciprocal responsibilities. Sickness creates in them a morbid desire for sympathy and self-inspection. The events of the family life must move around their constant self-assertion. The children must laugh only when they are at ease. The regulation of all the members must revolve around their exactions, or they are unhappy. Now there are duties *of* the sick, just as truly as *to* them. I could give instances enough in point of the mistake which good people may make, and lose the opportunities of doing immense good to others. If religion is the work of the man in his home, then the conversion that he is to accomplish, is by the teaching of his life; his patience in suffering; his "comfort wherewith he is comforted," by the secret springs



of lofty spiritual character. Find a querulous invalid whose whole thought always is on her own pains and aches, whose story of wrongs is ever the same, that she has the darkest and hardest lot: that she cannot find out why she is tried so severely. Behold her going from one cause of sorrow to another, and none of them worthy a moment's thought, and it is with her as it is with an unworthy priest; a great opportunity is always being sacrificed by the two alike. God just as truly ordains the sufferer in His Church, to show the law of vicarious sacrifice in example, as the preacher to preach it. The one tells how Christ suffered, and the other exemplifies it. Somehow we do not ever practically get at this. Pick up books of devotion at a venture, and they tell the sick anything else rather than this. They fail to communicate the faith that the piety that can comfort them, and in doing it rise as incense to the God and Father of light, is the faith which recognizes the opportunity of being like Christ, in resignation and spiritual conquest, as they are made like him in condition. It does not need intellect or talent to exhort. The Lord deliver us from invalid exhorters, in or out of the sick room: I mean those who do it on system. I can find you twenty popular shams in this method. The Lord bless the patient loving souls who bear infirmity, and sorrow, and pain, with a sweetness that often makes the sick room the gate of heaven. Call up again the man of whom I spake. Put him to school to such a priesthood. Let him study the gospel

scheme without knowing it, at the feet of such a sufferer, dear to him as ever, winding into his sacred feelings by love first, then by admiration, then by an almost adoring pity, and he may, if he will, localize the presence of Christ in such a sacrament, and adore it. Moses put off his shoes from off his feet before the burning bush ; it may be pardoned if he is tempted to do it, as he sees a Christian sublimated in this sacred fire on the altar of home.

Finally, I would say a word to those who have this problem, in one or another of its forms, in their homes. The first duty of your condition is to have a faith in the home religion that may mingle it with the ecclesiastical. The latter is essential, in its place. But it is not all. The sacraments are generally necessary to salvation : the home piety always. By the tie of Church-membership, you are bound not to lose the love of the brotherhood, in the refined selfhood of your families : but the family is the scene of your training. There you meet the problems of life and immortality. There you are being disciplined for the duties of the life out of doors. The house-keeper who neglects her household, to visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction is in error. The man who puts the thirty-nine articles before the piety of home, is in the same error. You have tried to make home as the garden of the Lord. It is so—only that some trouble has invaded its retreats. Perhaps it is your own fault, that it is so ; perhaps not. In either case, study your own problem in the

faith that God knows better than you do what is good for you. I thank Him for compelling me to recognize one fact, which it has taken many an application of the rod to drive into me: that He is wiser than I am in the practical work of life. You have an irretrievable sorrow. It is bound on your back. You cannot look for anything that you can do to take it off. Now, as a man, bear it; but as a Christian, accept it. Work it into the web of life cheerfully. It may be a color that you did not choose; it may be the one color that will outshine the rest in the last great trial. Your Church may be lofty, and its arches true to the highest religious thought of the past. Thank God for so much. Your psalms may be heard in it, lifting men to the sublime of thought and feeling. But I remind you that the song of the sacred Psalmist, which you and I could least spare to day, was written in tears, in the secret closet of a home desecrated by his own fault, and charged with a sorrow that never lifted on this earth. Look on the peace that passes understanding as coming to you often in "the comfort wherewith you can be comforted" by those whom God afflicts. I claim every asylum to-day, as the triumph of the Church. And angels see to-day, as always, the Christian work being done in the homes of Christians, who accept their cross and find it in the sorrows which the world cannot lift. May God help us to so follow Christ in truth.

## XVII.

### HOME, AS PREPARING MAN TO DIE.

*"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word."*—LUKE ii. 29.

N the past ages of the race of mankind, the matter of religion has gained a gloom, that is unbecoming the times in which we claim a purer knowledge of the nature and will of God. There is almost an infinite distance between the low conception of the God who rules us as it lies in the mind of an ignorant pagan, who is taught to appease the powers of evil and call that religion; and the serene mind of an enlightened man of our churches who neither propitiates the devil nor fears him. Something of the same remove is seen in the past. The butchering rites of sacrifice, which would simply shock us if we were once to witness them, the blood-stained priest, the smoking fire tainted with the consuming flesh of the victim; the reek of incense, which hardly kept the offensive odor in due bounds; that untold general condition of the



ancient temples, that poetry and divinity alike pass over in silence, but which were very serious facts about them, and moulded the religious instincts of men in many ways ; all these things lent a sensation of horror to the thoughts of the Divine being. He who was believed to be dwelling behind the smoke of the incense and accepting the blood of innocent victims, offered in propitiation to his wrathful mind, was a God to be feared, before He was loved.

Christ abolished all this. Men have been trying to save as much as possible out of the wreck made by His merciful revelation ; as if the God of our love must still be feared before He is loved. First, it was the most natural thing, that the early sufferers for the truth should make this mistake. Any man living among earthquakes must feel that there is a terror in the word *nature*, which a man living on more solid ground never feels. Then followed ages, in which it was probably impossible to have influenced bold and irresponsible men, with any refined ideas of a Being far off in the heavens. They were ruled by their fears alone, or at least chiefly. Men sometimes adore the dark ages ; but they show to us by the sorrowful spirit of their religious notions as much as by anything else, the shadow of gloom that had settled on them. After the horrors of persecution and the grossness of the sensual and cruel robbers, whom we call barons, had ceased, a poetic sentiment still stimulated the religious conscience of monks to perpetuate in their litanies and hymns the old style of gloom in

regard to things called religious. Five hundred years ago, there were two classes in the State; the religious and the secular. The former held piety to consist largely in the *heroic* and the *intense*; in fasting and prayer; in working out their salvation exclusively with fear and trembling; in finding the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation. The joy of life was left to the secular and the vulgar. The vulgar thus set off to themselves fell into sin, for they were compelled to begin their revels with the conviction that they were on the playground of the devil. Thus in time two ideas came down to us, and they rule us now unsuspected: one, that the spirit of piety is a sombre spirit, and teaches us to approach the Deity with the bated breath of fear, rather than the joyful spring of sons. The other fancy which rules us is the idea that piety is always the intense, the striking, the stimulant of wonder, the flash of the lightning, rather than the commonplace, the ordinary, the plains of duty, that are somewhat tiresome and dusty, rather than the hill-tops of exalted vision, where one stands, as it were, "Heaven-controlled."

I must cut across both of these notions, in managing the subject of *Home*, as *helping us to make ready to leave life naturally, and as nature would have us do it*. As home is on the whole a happy place for the most of men, it is not in the spirit of it, to help us to any sort of gloomy seriousness. How often I see this illustrated, I dare not say. Sometimes sitting by the bed of a dying man or woman, whose life has

been natural and happy, and whose disposition has been joyful : who is meeting the stern fact of death with full courage, and with unquestioned tenderness to those being left, it is always easy to see the disturbing influence of the old monkish notion, that there is an appointed way to die ; that men must be forced and gather seriousness by intention, as if God were on the watch to catch them at a fault. And again, at such times, we dwell on the things that have been only ripples in the deep still current of life, the foam on the surface, made by a few falls and rapids, and we forget that the long unnoticed times have really formed the character for eternity. Men will have it that sin is to be now, as it was under the Law. One only and main idea of piety is held to be sacrifice, in some sort, as gloomy as that of old dead religions. That is supposed to be the element to stir in us the love of beauty and goodness. They will have Christ speak still in the voice of Moses ; and somehow idealize the old Temple service as it were to regulate the temper of the Church of the Redeemed. That kind of piety, in my judgment, is not much dependent on the life of home. And I do not really know how home can help us to have it. Home is the opposite of the intense ; it is the place of rest, of peace ; the refuge from the storm,

“ A present help, when dangers press.”

Who desires the excitement of a stroke of lightning on the chimney about which his children gather, that

he may see his name in the next day's paper? But we remember the one moment of danger, and forget the long days of monotonous security.

Now, I consider that it may be proved that it is as natural for man to die as it is to be born or to live; and that there is a natural law that comes in to modify the sentiments of religion and the doctrines of divines. To explain what I mean, by its being natural to die, so that it must modify our ideas of the true religious sentiments, I refer you to the laws of nature, as to the death of animals, or even to the fall of leaves, or the changes of flowers. Any one can easily feel, in regard to favorite animals, that death is a blessing. It is as natural a part of their course as any other thing about them. The preparation is pre-determined, not only in the decay of their functions and the slipping away of their happiness in existence, but there is a prevision of this last change, for which those functions prepare them. The end of life is in no manner an accident. In a perfectly healthy process of nature, there is a regular acceptance of the results. Dr. Livingstone was for some seconds under the paws of a monstrous wild lion in the swamps of Africa. The brute had wounded him as he dashed him to the ground and stood above him in the act of killing him. He escaped, and testified, that by some unexpected pose of his faculties, he found that in the time of his danger, he had no sort of physical fear. The nervous system, or the mental-physical system suddenly developed a new law. He



looked up at the beast, with a sort of narcotized content. Fear gave place to a dream, as it were. He reasoned, afterwards, that possibly in nature, it is provided that a law of mercy comes in, in the case, that removes from all the victims of carnivorous animals the sense of dying, and makes it measurably painless.

If Livingstone had lived five hundred years ago, he would have ascribed his condition then to a miracle intervening in his favor. It is a truer civilization, that taught him to see in it the power of law.

But if we go to the analogies of the vegetable kingdom, the law is perfectly evident, that the coming on of the change from growth to decay is as natural and lovely as any portion of the progress of growth itself. It is as interesting to the botanist to trace the promise of decay in a plant as the blooming of a flower. Poetry tells us that they bloom to die. Science, on the other hand, reveals that they die to bloom. Indeed, the power of blooming is graduated by the other process. Nothing has the appearance of suddenness or unexpectedness. It moves on a rule, that shows the unity of goodness in one part as much as the other.

But it is suggested, as an objection, that man is a sinner. True! he is: and there is a purely religious part of the subject. Redemption is the equivalent of sin: hope, of penitence. My position is that there is a natural law, which is bound to modify, by right, the religious part. I am thinking all along of one

who is at peace with God, the right man who has accepted the covenant of the Gospel and lived measurably accordingly. The false sentiment is that he must die unhappy and with voluntary gloom; that the only language fit for him is the moan of the prodigal. St. Anselm and St. Francis were taken from their beds, as soon as it was evident that they were about to die, and placed naked on the ground, or on sack-cloth, and sprinkled with ashes, while admiring brethren stood around and watched the unlovely scene as they passed away. The scene was true to the piety of that day. Is it necessary to that of ours? I think not. There have been ages when the robe of those monks was considered the only sure couch on which to find the last repose. They have passed away forever. We may mourn the decay of sentiment, and of ecclesiastical faith. Let us, in the mean while, act by such as we have, namely, the faith in law, the sentiments that are begotten of it.

The true influence of home, if it is real, acts on the sound man, as a power, in the course of his whole life, here and hereafter. The old monkish feeling that the way to heaven lay only in the path of tribulation and voluntary sorrow, yet hangs on us, and we are always missing the influences that belong to our circumstances. An ideal of what piety ought to be, to conform it to the standard which they have set us, interferes with the acceptance of facts as they are. These facts are:

I. *That home helps us to grow old.* It may do it

in either the mode of satisfaction or of disappointment. If a man is prosperous; if he succeeds in the objects of honorable pursuit and acquires a fair share of the goods of life, he finds, on trial, that there is a mysterious law, or rather an unexpected law, which his prosperity developes, that earthly joys, in a healthy mind, bring on it a profound dissatisfaction. Take the rich man, like Zaccheus; the best use that he can make of his gains, is to scatter them. I do not speak of the conscience, stimulated by a religious sense of duty; but of the ordinary reason on things as they exist. Here is one who has forty times more money than he can make any personal use of. What is he to do with it? There is a limit to self-glorification, in healthy minds. If one likes diamonds, there is a point where diamonds cease to fill the vision of an immortal intellect, when their precious glint begins to suggest that there is something better to live for, some higher thought, which they only suggest. If one has power, he soon discovers that the only power, after all, is to work for others. He rules forty kingdoms. He can only govern them for the good of others: one of them is all that he can indulge his vanities with. Take a man of learning. He learns nothing more practically than the law of his mind, that all he knows is either capable of use for others, or is vain. It is impossible to focus more than a sufficiency of light on any one spot. If you try to place more, you begin to deflagrate the substance. The Bible gives all this argument, in the

two books of Solomon. That wail of his, "Vanity of vanity," is the gloom of a successful man. But it was also the wail of a Jew, whose hopes of immortality were dim,\* compared with the mind of a Christian who lives in the light of the Gospel. Now that life and immortality are brought to light in the revelation of Christ, the natural workings of the illuminated reason of the believer should make him give up his hold on the good things of the world, without that gloomy struggle that marked the experience of the Israelite. The void, of which the poet speaks, "which the world can never fill," he should never look to the world to fill; but accept the weariness of satiety as properly drawing him from lesser to greater good. A learned writer speaks on the theme on this wise: "The inferior creatures find in the objects and scenes of earth enough to satisfy their limited natures. But we are mightier than the perishing world; and therefore find no rest in any earthly thing. There is here no pillow for the head, no home for the heart, for the pilgrims of eternity. Our rarest delights, our noblest experiences, speak to us most forcibly of our immor-

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\*"The Jewish religion is characterized in an eminent degree by the dimness of its conception of a future life. From time to time there are glimpses of the hope of immortality. But, for the most part, it is in the present life that the faith of the Israelite finds its full accomplishment. 'The grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate Thee. . . . The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day.'"—(Isaiah xxxvii. 18, 19; Psalm lxxxviii. 12.) *Dean Stanley, Hist. Jewish Church. Lec. vii. p. 173.*



talities ; just as the strange midnight sky, lit up by the southern cross, brings sad thoughts to the heart of the sailor on the Pacific Ocean, and reminds him how far he is from home. Our restlessness in the midst of rest, our feeling of weariness and incompleteness even in the midst of the richest feast of joy, are perturbations produced in us by the attraction of that higher world which is our native country. And that tinge of wistfulness, which comes over our souls when we stand on the calm pure heights of life, is like the purple hue that bathes at dawn and sunset the mountain summit that is nearest heaven, and assimilates dull rock and brown earth with the ethereal splendors of the sky, teaching us that the sun that sets on our earthly home rises again on our heavenly."\*

Or again, take the disappointed man, who has more or less missed the objects of his ambition ; there is for him the preparations of advancing age, and its issue, in the teachings of his home. The other, we will say, has the positive side of the power ; he has the negative pole in his hand. For him the God of mercy and all comfort has laid up stores of preparation in the history of the race in its relation to God. On the one side we see there the opportunity of the return of the prodigals who have spent their early patrimony, and seek the possibilities of a late repentance. On the other side, many of the saints who

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\* McMillan, "Sabbath of the Fields," p. 85.

pass across the scene have found in the disappointment of their first hopes the seeds of an enduring comfort. The not finding a city here, is the Divine argument for one that hath foundations. The eye that looks for no relief in the stern laws that rule this lower circle of time, has its energies directed to the regions where there are the consolations of hope, of recompense, and pardon. It happens every day in this latitude, in the cases of consumption. The thoughtful invalid sees the light of common day gradually dying out, and another mind coming on. He begins by struggles to resist, as the thought of failure from the busy world intrudes, and then one after another the struggles cease. A soft feeling intervenes. Day unto day uttereth speech to such, and night after night teaches them wisdom. Why should it not be so with us, even without the intrusion of disease? Why not take the lesson that is set us, even of ourselves, and not be dull scholars in the school of the great sufferer?

II. Home teaches this lesson, by its losses. A vacant chair, an old souvenir of a child, of a sister, a parent, a wife, of any one who was once a part of our lives and then vanished from our sight, and there comes a messenger, whose voice is still and small, but it has in it the echo of a diviner thought. I doubt if all the provings of the schools can begin to reach the religious power of the shades that are welcome to the thoughts of the bereaved. I mean, the intellectual argument is a dry light: the warm

sympathy of true love gives to the other life a nearness which the heart is always craving. If part of the heart goes out to the vast expanse of space, the remainder is always following it, in search for it. Two facts will show this. One the frequent instances in the Bible, when the doctrine of immortality, and the consolations at the loss of friends, are prompted by the loss. The gospel never reasons about it. Lazarus dies, and the teacher comes into the chamber of every mourner now, saying: "He is not dead, but sleepeth; . . . For such there is no dying." "Death for us," as the poet says, "is not so much as the lifting of the latch, but only a step into the open air, out of a tent already luminous with light that shines through its transparent walls. The heaven within us is irresistibly attracted to the heaven above us, by the law of similarity, as the bubble of air beneath the water of the lake ascends to mingle with the atmosphere that rests upon the surface."

III. It is the constant strain of affected gloom, that we grow old. But why? What is there, in fact, about a healthy old age, that can be the subject of lugubriousness? Because Solomon, after a life of doubtful indulgence; Solomon, a polygamist, and certainly no model for us, in most things—because he has told of the years of his, when he could say he had no pleasure in them, it is held to be pious to re-echo and exaggerate his gloomy complaints. There is truth in what he says. But it was a most judaical way of putting it.

Age is the autumn of our year. There has been blue light in the spring, when the young plants of hope sprouted; red lights all summer while they were growing; and there is a time and use for the yellow tints of the fall, to prepare the ripened grain. We think of all the changes of nature, and with no thought of gloom. Shall religion alone inculcate this base feeling, beyond what nature imposes of herself? Religion ought to alleviate it; and does, if it is allowed the chance. Just as every day, we rise refreshed and go forth to labor, and at night sit down and rest, weary but not troubled, contemplative, but content, willing to see the stars take the place of the garish sun, that we may sleep the better, so it can be with this longer day. There is in the very frame of every true man, the preparations for his last change. Take that very chapter of Ecclesiastes about the weary days of old age, and you see the working of this law. The almond tree shows its white blossoms, the desire fails, the silver cord is loosed and the wheel turns heavily at the cistern; showing that this animal frame has done its work, and like the leaves of the autumn, is to make way for a better thing. Suppose, for a moment, that a fiat should issue out of the skies that there is to be no more dying; all things else being unchanged. It would be the curse of all known curses. Go to the insane asylum. No one there is to die. The maniacs would grow old, and haggard, and diseased, and rave hopelessly in the gloomiest prison of



despair. Look at the sick, who now know that the relief of trouble to them is the sleep that the infinite Father gives His children. There would be no hope of any, if they were to be doomed forever to a world where there can be no change. Look at yourselves. You are now part of a caravan, that is always crossing the dark river. Death has made way for your success. You would be separated for aye from all that you have loved; and for what? Only to escape the little act of dropping off the autumn fruits in the course of nature. But you say, *we are sinners*. I reply, think on it well. Has your religion done no more for you than that? Do we not come back by this question to the fact that I set out with, that we are following the exaggeration of the monkish ages, and giving to the Divine countenance the look of severity that it was the intention of the Saviour to destroy? Is it or is it not possible to have a reality of possession, so that a man can trust himself to die, and to think of doing it without being put out of his way, and laid on the sackcloth and ashes which Anselm affected? I believe that the only way in which he can cure this monkish tendency is by the acceptance of a view of piety that has its original in the home where God puts a man to work out his problems of life. We are sinners; but are we saved by grace, or no? If we have done the best we can, then we are surely salvable. If we have done the meanest sort of work only, in the vineyard, then there is the more grace. Either way, can we

say, as old Parson Johnson did, on his death-bed, in a few hundred yards of this place, to the question of a clergyman: "Do you *believe* in Christ now?" "No;" said he, "I don't; now I *know* in whom I have trusted."

Is it not a duty for a man to believe, that this moment he is approving the good and pursuing it, to the best of his powers? He may feel like a man at the bottom of a hill, and it is a long way to the top; but it is just here that his faith would help him if he would give it a chance. I put it in another way. Here is an old Christian. He is not perfect, but he is sincerely bent on the rightest thing he knows in everything. He might be better, and he knows it. But he will die very much as he is, with his face turned Zion-wards. Now, as I look at it, God gave His Son to teach us the verity of the humanity which we feel to be the just principle of judging each other. You and I would say of such: "He is a good man; let him pass on." How does God say different, through the lips of Jesus of Nazareth? I stilled the horrors of one dying man once by this word to him: "If Jesus of Nazareth were here now, sitting in this chair, and had heard you say all that you have said to me for the last hour, do you not believe that He would say to you: 'This was all known to Me eternities before you were born. I came down on this very errand, to tell just such troubled people as you are, to find God through Me. Now put your hand in mine, and I

will take all that you have said of yourself for granted, and lead you to the light.' ”

Now take an extreme case, for I am not afraid of the principle: and cannot afford to be, after sending a man out of the world with such advice. Here is a man who is mentally blind to sectarian doctrines. He does not see that he is obliged by the decrees of the Council of Nice, or to know where Nice was. He is baptized, or he ought to be. He has very little skill at divinity, and what he has is somehow set awry by his inherited memories. His father, we will say, was a Swedenborgian, and his mother, well, say she was a Quakeress. He has not had much time to make out either the Thirty-nine Articles or the Calvinistic Five Points, and has the smallest anxiety about either. He is a good man: a good father, brother, friend, citizen, and a religious man. He fears God, and his heart warms up to the life of Christ, till the essence of the story of it is the very joy of his heart. He believes that Christ did the right thing in all He did. He is always trying to do the thing nearest to it. And yet you cannot square him to any creed, he is so blind. Has he a right to trust to the truth that has been melted into his life by home pieties, though we cannot analyze it, or place it? I think that he can. And that if we do not have that sort of truth melted into our life, we cannot put confessions of belief in the scale to serve as make-weights for the lack of it. It is this reality that I think we all need, to teach us to cut loose from the exaggera-

tions of the past and the fanaticisms of this age, and go back to the home-life for the tests of the character. There we can find gentler thoughts of the Father, who is known to us best in the line of home thoughts, and find in our religion the courage to trust him fully, and consent to grow old and pass away from this scene, when our turn comes to do it, as those who exchange one home for a better. Yea, it is possible now, without much stretch of fancy, to see the aged Christian now standing like Simeon, the righteous, the true man, and holding the Christ in his arms; able, without a tone of grief or melancholy to continue his chant in our day: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word."



## XVIII.

### .THE HOME IN REST.

*“For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”—HEBREWS iv. 10.*

HE chief thought that strikes me in this text, is the continuousness of the work of God, as the index or hint to us of the continuity of the life of the souls of sanctified men.

In one sense, and that a good sense, God did cease from his works. He ceased from creating new forms of matter. It may seem to us a matter of fanciful choice, as we take it for granted thoughtlessly. We may suppose that he could as well have rested on the second or the third day, as to rest on the seventh. Or we may imagine that he did it for the sake of the example; as a foundation for the coming Sabbath, and a sort of Divine poetry, on which to move the imagination of the race. I am unable to rest in such views of the Creator. There is an interlinking of all his works, one with another. There is as much connection in the kingdom of grace as in that of nature. We need not be able to find out the secret links. They may not be revealed. We can still

believe, from all that we do know, the unity and continuousness of all that we do not know. Look off for a moment from the Scripture to nature. No one who catches the spirit of the laws of the natural world, ever doubts for a moment that there is no room for any break or change of intention in all its mighty operations. Ages circle up into notice, and as one effects its work, it sinks gradually out of sight, to make room for another, which, as the apostle says of death, and the Christian conquest, swallows it up. "Death is swallowed up in victory;" that is, nothing is lost, though all is changed. The ages may yet be traced by science in nature as they were revealed to Moses, as being six great change-periods chiefly.

But though the epochs were six, the demonstration and continuance of the creative energy was one. The work was one. The Sabbath on which the Creator entered, was not one of idleness or vacuity, nor did it imply a change of purpose, but only, so to say, the continuance of the species which he had before created. When man was seen to stand on the edge between the created and the Divine, and the mystery of all things made itself felt; a being who could be the subject of great and precious promises, after passing through the toilsome ways of sin, appeared; then the work of mere creation was finished, and the equal work of preservation manifested itself.

It is equally true, in this sense, that God rested from his works; and that, as Jesus said, in justification of his healing on the Jewish Sabbath: "My

Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It was a peculiarity of the system of mere law, that the Jews should have the one reason given to them to enforce their Sabbath, and of the Gospel, that the Church should be able to perceive the other reason as the guide of the consciences of her children.

All that I seek to gain from this text, to-day, is the thought of the divine analogue, which seems to have flashed on the imagination of the writer. "God entered into his rest." His week-day toil was over. Ages on ages the fiery star had been cooling down to the point where the crust of heated granite began to shut in the fires that blazed across the corner of creation where it was set revolving. Then in the steam and mist of countless spaces of enduring time, the solid and movable portions of matter learned to rise and take their places in the mighty scheme of a round world. At last, when the grand total was accomplished, and man rose on the green sward of the Garden of the Lord, with the capacity of entering into friendship with the Creator, the long week was ended. The rest of enjoyment began. God walked in the garden, in the cool of the evening. Spiritual life rose superior to physical. In place of growing vegetation, or singing birds, or sportive animals, the oneness of the image introduced the delights of friendship, the interchange of thought, the growing and expanding intellect, and the development of the life of the soul. It was not the rest of idleness, but of work still : work nearer to the grand

consummation for which the Creator issued the original fiat, "Let there be light."

Now this idea of rest, is the chief use of the word in the Scriptures. If you think of it a little, it must be so. To you or me, say, death is the cessation of everything. If we say, a man rests in death, the thing which we see before our eyes impresses our minds chiefly. Rest signifies to us, the doing nothing at all. It is a blank; nothing more. It is a horror; mere vacancy, insensibility, absence of thought and love. The best thing that we can say of it, is: "Our friend is not." But when the All-seeing-Eye takes in the same fact, there is no cessation of one of the laws of His kingdom. The earth of the body of the loveliest saint goes back to its earth, the ashes to its ashes, the dust to its dust, by the same law that called them out of the earth at first. It is no cessation of work; no impression of failure. The circle of perpetual change revolves still, without a check in its advance. Nothing good is lost, nothing true is disturbed. Thus, when the Son of God had it in charge to talk to us in the language of the angels, he never spake of death as other men did. He always betrayed the native consciousness of the incessant progress of law in the dead, as much as in the living. He said, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." The pulse does not beat, but another pulse still beats in the frame of nature which takes in her body and carries on and fulfills the will of the Creator. Again, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that



I may awake him out of sleep." Lazarus was dead to Martha and to mortals: to Jesus and the angels, he was *asleep*. To her there was only the hope of a final resurrection in the last day, a mighty miracle and break in the order of creation, a great horror and chasm between them. To Jesus, there was the presentness of the resurrection. "*I am* the Resurrection and the Life." So, when the Apostles at last caught the idea, the death of the Christian became only a sham and a nightmare. To die became to be with Christ. Certain ideas of the Divine had entered into the spiritual nature: and they were as the light imprisoned in the souls of the believers. Oceans could not quench it again. Nothing could separate them again from the love of Christ; a Sabbathical life dawned on them; martyrdom became a fanaticism.

There was a Lord's Day to follow this week of work. St. John heard a voice from heaven, and then heard another great sigh of relief echo it from the Church on earth, answering, Amen, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea," saith the Spirit in the hearts of the churches, "they rest from their labors and their works do follow them." It is this grand thought which St. Paul is aiming to explicate in this passage. He is straining at a nobler thought of rest than ever dawned on the pagan mind; a rest of Sabbathical labor, a rest of song, as the redeemed practise the song of Moses and the Lamb. It is not the rest of the idler. It is the

rest of the worlds as they run down the ringing grooves of change—it is the rest of the angels, as in appointed orders and ranks they do always the will of God in heaven and earth. It was not pause, or vacancy, or decay. It was not so that God gave his beloved sleep. It was not the dreamless sleep of the animal man. It was the continuous life of the sanctified nature. It was the soul waking from the chaos of the worldly, and looking back on the æons of its growth, and whispering in the ear of the Redeemer, “it is all right;” it is at last, by thine example, proved to have been “very good.”

Look at his instances for this suggestion.

I. You have the picture, in few words, of the dreary march of the Israelites across the waterless desert to the rest of Canaan. There was a fearful possibility of not entering into the rest of the land of Canaan. There was a might of faith in the obedience to the law, which could evolve the character of the heroes who should enter into the labors of that conquest and the cultivation of the soil. There was continuous work, only varied.

II. He rises naturally to the great subject of his proof. *God rested* after the long night of chaos. He crossed the wilderness of the fern ages, and the long, unreasoning, pleiocene periods, to enter at last on the Sabbatical day of his redemption of man. And in his usual manner the writer runs the two instances together, keeping uppermost, all through, his main idea of the continuity of the consciousness

of the parties. He completes his thought with the blessed words, as derived from both thoughts: "There remaineth, therefore, a *Sabbatismos*, i. e., an essential Sabbath, one made up of all the foregoing ideas; a work-rest period, as God work-rested, as Joshua work-rested in conquering and then in ruling the promised land." Thus he reaches his summation, for the instruction of the church. "So," he would say to us, "death is the Sabbath of God: the Jordan of Jesus, the leader of the hosts of the true Israel:" "for he that is entered into his rest," (and who is this he, but the Christian who has fallen on sleep), "he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his." I repeat, that the main thought of this chapter is *the continuousness of the conscious life of the believer*. He passes from his home here to "his long home." We see him keeping a *Sabbatismos* in the temple of the New Jerusalem. We behold him in some one of the olive-clad homes of the land of promise. We discover that it is a revealed truth, deeply impressed on the hearts of the inspired writers, that the life we lead here is the one best known to us as the prototype of the next.

Fancy the laboring man in the city of Antioch reading this passage. Six days he is toiling, and in constant danger of the rage of the enemies of the new faith. Six days he is tempted of the devil, and drawn down to lower thoughts by the occupations of the hard, unbelieving world. Six days he goes in the strength of his Sabbath thoughts and lies down weary

and dusty, doubtful and care-worn, on the eve of the Sabbath. He rises on the seventh day, to draw near to the throne of the Crucified, and take into his soul the higher life, the purer thoughts of the better world, the balm of his sorrow, the antidote of his sin, the armor of God against his spiritual enemies and troubles. He is not the same man that he was all the week. He is another sort of man. He is stronger, brighter, greater than he was. The hut in which he is living, widens out into a temple. The duties that gave him so much care, are tinged with light from the celestial walls. He moves to the step of the great army of martyrs. Like boys on the street keeping step to a band of military music, he is transformed into a double consciousness. He sees through the seen into the unseen.

There is this idea of rest from chaos, or rest from the wilderness, in our faith of another world; and coterminous with it is the thought that there is a necessary identity in it, now and then. In other words, if we look to the revealed declarations of the Bible for our answer, as to the home of the soul, the chief fact which comes to the surface is the identity of life now and then. There is a Divine analogy, or parallelism, which is always making itself felt. As the Divine work is one, under apparent variations, so the life of man rises from the world of sin and sorrow to a rest from them, but not to a blank of the main issues of it all. God rested from his work. God never rests from working. He sustains in the sun-



shine the creatures for whom he originally wrought in the mist and fog. It is Sabbath day with Him now ; but it is a day of higher work, of intenser life, so far as He is related to us. Therefore, the argument is, the rest of death is as like the work of this life, dropping the body only, as the Sabbath-day is like the Monday or Friday. On the one, we look down to the soil, we delve after dust ; on the other we are the same men, but it is the privilege of the sacred time, that we can dream of a higher walk ; that we can take sweet counsel together, and walk in the house of God as friends ; that the scenes of life can be touched with the light from the Sun of Righteousness.

The life that we live here is the parent of the next. "Heaven is but earth made richer." I said just now, *only dropping the body*, and the distinction is plain. There is in every one of us, in so far as we are thinking beings, a separate life, the life of thought and feeling, the reverie and the keen anxiety of the future, the sense of sin and guilt, the fear of punishment. We toil and drudge long after the wants of the body are satisfied ; we are all being driven by this second life, by the passions of the mind. The larger portion of our religious experiences lies in the contest between the sense of a right and wrong, that require a faith in something higher than the things that are seen. The lover of fashion is in a sense living after a faith in something which art declares necessary. The man of pleasure who rises above a brute, gilds the horizon

of his low landscape with some sort of faith. It is the other part of us asserting itself. We may well say then, dropping the body, the identity is certain, as a fact of revelation. In this body of clay, we fear death. There we lose that fear. Think, for a moment, what the world would be to one who could utterly lose that fear, and retain the sense of the truth, that God doeth all things well. We lose the pains of sickness. There God shall wipe away all the tears from the eye. But this very sort of promise implies the sameness of the real life. When Abraham reproves Dives, he reminds him of the compensations which link the two parts of man's destiny. He talks in the tongue of that age, it may be said; and it is true. But it is the tongue that the Bible always uses. From the garden of Eden till the end of the scenery of those sacred pages, the same thought appears, in all the pictures of prophets, sages or apostles. And Christ stands in advance of them all, denying that death is a fact of any significance to the true believer. He always speaks of the Christian experience as one and continuous, from the first throb of joy at pardon, to the strong shout of the conqueror. It is as a river which for a while runs in the narrow gorge of the mountains, under the gloom of the dark cypresses and wailing firs, tossed with rapids and vexed with cataracts. Then it emerges into the sunny meadows of the land of Beulah. It flows with a softened sound, and the heavens are reflected from its glassed

surface, and we muse of things that pass man's understanding.

The first objection to this, is that there is so much that we do not know, of the other world, that most Christians refuse to accept any determinate thoughts about it. It dwells in their minds, at best, only as a haze, a splendid fog. You can see that they esteem it pious to have the vaguest notions of that which is the sternest of realities. We do know very little, but we know enough. We know that as a tree falls, so it must lie. We know that as we go out of these homes of ours, we go all that they have made us. We know that the judgment that meets us the moment that we put off these bodies, is the great trial judgment of the deeds done in the body, which the soul carries with it to the world of eternal spirits. It is not the outside life before the world that alone comes into the view, but the life which lies under that chiefly, the life of home, on which all the rest is being formed. It is this identity of the two conditions, and the interlinking of them, which makes the teaching of Christ to differ from all other teachers before Him. He is always consciously in both conditions. He lives here and He lives in the real life at one and the same time, as he said: "I and the Father are one," and again: "the Father worketh hitherto and I work." Now, if the faith in Christ is a real belief, that He has developed the right consciousness for all his disciples, it is not necessary that we should know the halo of the atmosphere of

the paradise of God; it is only useful, that we realize the fact, that we are the same beings there and here. We are here in bodies of the earth, earthy and transient. The same soul which is developing in the life of every day, lives there, the same. Many pious people live by intention in constant effort at compunctious preparation for a future judgment. The true faith is in present decision of that great question—in so living that our hearts do not condemn us. We pass out of the secure home of the soul here, knowing, that wherever we go, it is to a purer home, which is provided for us. The next objection, which is sometimes felt and occasionally expressed to this identity of life now and then, is the fancy of men, that the gospel has intentionally thrown the vail of undefinable spirituality over the future state. Nothing is farther from the truth. God does not reveal to us many things which we can know of ourselves. He gave us reason before He revealed anything to it. Where he does not reveal more, it may be because what He has given us of reason is enough to decide all questions. Often men ask, "What does the Bible say?" It says nothing. It rather speaks to us, as Jehovah did to Moses on the shore of the Red Sea—asking us, "Why do you stand praying to me? Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward." The gospel tells us of a spiritual body. But that body is conditioned. It dwells somewhere. It has need of a city without the foundations of these earthly homes, but a city as



real, a home as definable as those which we have here. The body of Christ dwells somewhere in glory transcendant, and of incorruptible faculties. Our bodies will dwell somewhere. They will not be driven by the winds or exist in fanciful and impossible spiritualness. The body of the resurrection will be a real body, and will need a home, as truly as the bodies of men now. Where it will be, God has not revealed : but He has revealed enough for us to know that it will be.

It would be pleasant, if there were time, to trace the revelation of this one fact through the Bible : that we are now forming in daily life the dwelling places of the soul for eternity. The Bible follows the teaching of nature, that nothing good ever dies. The truth gathers force as the story of redemption unfolds. Nothing in nature ever moves by chance. The winds blow where they list, and we may not tell whither they go, or when they may return on their predestined course ; but they move by laws as certain as those which keep the planets in their courses. And above them man is held by the destinies of the Creator. We cease from our works, only as God ceased from His, to rise to a nobler and truer home, a long Sabbath of rest, and an inheritance among the sons of God, of all the best capabilities of the spirit which he has given us. Home then is the prototype of the heaven hereafter. Drop out all things that are fleeting in themselves, and all things that offend, and the residue is heaven. Purify

all the Sabbaths which we spend here : lift them to the best that they can do for us, and the remaining part is that which St. Paul called, "The rest which remaineth for the people of God." Drop out all the means of culture, the religious expectations, which then will turn to realities, and the sacraments of all degrees, that will then be overwhelmed in the fruition of perfect holiness, and the residue is eternal life. We sing in the words of the hymn that the joys of brotherly love make the Church to be, "A little heaven below." It is true as far as it can go. There is a power greater for good in the purity of a peaceful home. It is God's school for the formation of His children in the ways of godliness. In that upper world there is no sun nor light of the moon, for the light is in the nature of the souls of the redeemed. There is no temple there, for the glory of the Lord is the atmosphere of the land of the redeemed. There, faith gives up her charge of the man, for it expires in sight. There hope becomes satisfaction in enjoyment, for where all that can be wished is possessed, there can be no longer a wish or a hope for more. Only the love, which has been learned here in the homes of the good, will remain. It will expand and take in all the hosts of the saved, and bless the soul forever. But it will hold every home-tie, as strongly as it does now. We shall not marry nor give in marriage, but we shall not lose one sign of our true personal life there, that we should wish to keep. That love we are set

to learn now. God help us to work out the lesson. May our ideas of His will blend softly with the toils of life, and sweeten the cares that sometimes oppress us, in the rush of the world. Let us take thought to make home a school where the love of God shall consecrate our daily duties. The relations which it creates, are divine, and they are paramount. All other relations are subordinate. The law requires us to be good citizens. The Church demands of us the profession of the faith once delivered to the saints. But nature commands the heart to run in the channels of fathers and mothers, of children and fellow-helpers, in order that the others may be effectual. It is sometimes imagined that the Church creates virtue; that her sphere is semi-miraculous; that she saves us out of and without reference to the home-life. On the other hand, her duty is to point out to us the way of virtue in common life. We can never come into harmony with the Bible until we recognize the law on which it was written, to teach us how to live. The Church baptizes your children into the covenant of life, but she gives them back to you, with the charge that "ye shall see to it that they are virtuously brought up to lead godly lives." She spreads for you the Lord's sacred board; but, it is to give you *strength* by the way, for your several battles of life in your households. The actual living is at home. There we can create the types of the better life, where there is no temple. For there we form

the characters which go with us up to that throne, where we are to be judged by the deeds done in the body. In them we are now working out our salvation, and when we have done the work set us, we too can rest from our own works, as God did from His.

“All which is real now remaineth,  
And fadeth never ;  
The hand which upholds it now, sustaineth  
The soul forever.

“Leaning on Him, make with reverent meekness  
His own, thy will,  
And with strength from Him, shall thy utter weakness  
Life’s task fulfil.

\* \* \* \*

“Then of what is to be, and of what is done,  
Why quieriest thou ?  
The past and the time to be are one,  
And both are Now.”



## XIX.

### HOME—ITS VACANT PLACES.

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*“And he took her by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi: which is, being interpreted, Damsel (I say unto thee), arise.”—ST. MARK V. 41.*

 HIS was her *mother-tongue*. And possibly this was her mother's early morning call. She had heard it from infancy, every day summoning her from refreshing sleep, to her joys and duties. It was indeed the very sublime of religion condescending to the humblest lines of common life. It was in little what the great Incarnation was in substance, *God manifest in the flesh*—the Life Eternal touching the life lowly and common. We may recall our own recollections of the one voice, which once soothed us or roused us in childhood; the voice which was ever truest to us, when most simple and familiar. We can understand why the pen of St. Mark dropped into the record, the very Syriac words which Jesus used, at the moment, to the little girl of this peasant family, when He summoned her soul back to her place on earth. The uninspired mind looks up to a deed like this, with the ambition

to invest it with rich halos of celestial light. The mind of Christ, on the other hand, looked down upon it, to see in it a perfect simplicity. Our doubting hearts, heavy with worldliness and cares of living, keep afar the thoughts of the "Father's house of many mansions." We say of a lost friend, now, it may be, with the rabbis—"I know that he will rise again in the far off, tremendous resurrection, at the last day." Jesus felt the other life so near and so truly present with us all, that He has always treated it as the simple co-ordinate of this one. He seldom speaks of a future time in divine things. His sense was of the *presentness* of the true life. The maid was not dead to Him—she was only sleeping. Lazarus too, though he had already seen corruption in the tomb, was only heavy with sleep, as He looked on him; was only waiting for Him to come that He might awake him out of sleep. So to Martha He spake those wonderful, simple words, which tell us now most vividly of perfect peace: "*I am*—not so much, *I will be*—but *I am* the Resurrection and the Life." I now give you and all mourners to the end of the ages—the *living*—the *winged words*—which shall dispel the clouds of sin, doubt and moral death from your souls, so that he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.

There is a legend in Persia, that during the seasons of pestilence, when Azrael, the Destroyer, has fulfilled the number of deaths, a single drop of sacred dew falls through the lethal atmosphere, and the

magical power of death is ended for the time. There is a drop of sacred dew in the knowledge of that truth which the Son of Man both said and did, in the three acts of raising the dead, and then Himself coming back again from that old rock-bound Sheol—whose iron gates had never before been thus invaded—and as quietly, as if it were the simplest thing to do, said with a tone of love that killed all strangeness, “Mary”—and flashed into a woman’s soul the first light of the living Lord and Saviour. So it is in harmony with the sublime *familiarity* of Jesus on all the points of this subject, which men had pondered and consecrated with all solemn and august symbols, as the one great dread and dark horror of the race—that He should have used the dear mother-call to this little girl—in words most familiar to her youthful ear—as if she only had slept soundly for a night, and were drowsing too long—‘*Talitha-cumi*—‘Little one—get up.’

Religion comes to us, at last, with its greatest powers, in the familiar haunts of home. Pure religion, to the first Pastor of the Mother Church, was found in two of the most familiar things—pity and purity. To the Seer of Patmos, the eagle-eyed Divine, it was to be sought in Love. There God dwelt, and there He could be found. The Evangelist of the first age, turned from the perplexed reasonings on divinities to find his solution of all casuistries in the principle, that “Love is the fulfilling of the law, the fulfilling of all law—the end of all doubts and fears.” So in

all times, the inner circle of man's life is his *home*—and there angels come to visit him—and there “the windows of agates” are always standing open, through which he daily looks away to eternal things.

Let me now call you to these thoughts of our homes, which are simple enough, but which are most potent for good. The *vacant places* of our homes are sacred to us as the gates of pearl. All powers of religion are demonstrated by what they can do in us. “God is in you.” The eternal is yours—and, in the mystic work of holy thought and life—there is a sense, in which you need take no note of past or future. There is a faith, which, like the magical gift of the caliph's bath, looks at once directly into the realities of the things “which are unseen and eternal.” There are chambers in our homes, where loved ones are *sleeping*, and there are places in our hearts, where they are always felt to be *breathing* with the regular, soft airs of a diviner health. There are spots in Greenwood, where of a sunny Lord's day, we sit on the soft grass that weaves their covering, and we hear the winds which sing a low requiem, and, softened by a diviner sense of life in death, we are able to turn back to the toil and vexation of the week with a renewed patience. Would that Christians would find in these *direct messengers*, the signs of a consecration which needs no endorsement from synagogue or sect. All the preacher can do is to talk about them. They are “God's own visitations”—God's own ministers in mercy—His great catechizings by which



He takes us at our word, when we profess Him before men, and begins to make us worthy to be confessed by Him at last.

In all our homes are these sensitive blanks—these spots where an electric current will thrill the inner man, to connect him with a better and a truer life. St. Paul taught it. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." And after myriad echoes of the same law, a poet of our own has repeated it :

"There are, who, like the Seer of old,  
Can see the helpers God has sent,  
And how life's rugged mountain-side  
Is white with many an angel tent !"

The departed make a genuine part of our families. Often it is made sadly true, as was said by a sorrowful man: "They live with us, who die—they die, who live." They are sleeping. They are in Paradise—and they are none the less with us. So then, in a sense we are with them in Paradise.

By the selfish view of our own future, we are all the time putting away from us the home-thoughts of another life. Where all hangs on one dreadful issue, which is set in the far distance, and which can be anticipated only with vague horrors, that gather about it inevitably, then the whole tendency of thoughtful minds is to forget it more or less, to slip away from it on the first opportunity, and relegate it to the doctrinal area of ecclesiastical discussion. The

best men among professed Christians are often seen to halt and hesitate at the commonest words of hope, as to an escape from the left hand side of the judgment-seat of Christ. Those who are evidently sincere in their profession of the faith of God's Love as manifested in His Son, who was given to die for their sins, do not dare to utter the apodosis of that truth—"therefore He will with Him freely give us all things." We *reason* out a few of the simple promises of His great Covenant, as if we were dealing with Him over the grave of a dead Christ. We may be able to utter now and then some of the coined texts of the early saints, as what we should like to claim for ourselves, if we dared—but we, as a generation, are mostly inconsistent in recognizing the powers over us in religion as first of all *present* with us—as *now* in us and others. Religion, we will have it, must be honored, as it is removed from our ordinary convictions. Piety takes on a veil of false humility, and thinks to honor God, as it exalts Him to the same metaphysical *farness*, which once left the nations in darkness, and tempted the best of the Gentiles to satisfy their natural yearnings with intermediate 'false gods.'

The religion of home alone teaches to see God in Christ as "very near to every one of us." In its sacred, and no less sacred because familiar retreats, He does not leave Himself without daily witness, that He does good and gives us all things freely to enjoy. Christ was God manifest in the flesh—first in

the form of the Son of Mary—next, and always, in the persons of those whose spirit He has chastened and purified, that we may read in them every day the lively epistles of His Spirit of grace. The chief teachers of such nearness of the diviner powers of religion are those who have been ours for a time, who have been known to us in the forms of flesh and blood, who have toiled by our sides in common duties, who have won upon us by their graces, and given to holy words and phrases the reality of daily intercourse. They reflected on us for awhile with gentle, almost insensible irradiation the love of Christ, and then they heard a call to depart and follow Him in the garden of the Lord. We had learned from them, before we knew to what the lesson tended. We had conned the alphabet, before we suspected into what names and to what high purpose the letters would come. God—as the first prayer taught us in early life, is our *Father*. We never saw Him. He was known of old, dwelling in darkness, and His voice was loud with terror when He spake to men of old time. In some way He had manifested His inner nature in Christ—but we thought of Him, even then, as the Being of secret mysteries, veiled in immaculate purities, and infinitely averse to all manner of sin and infirmity, coming to offer, in some strange and subtle way, the elect robe of imputed righteousness; and coming again at the end of the world to judge the guilty, and with ineffable majesty to give the signal to angel-reapers to gather

up the wheat and cast out the chaff to final burning.

Meanwhile there was near us a father, who was to us as no other man; who always judged us by a tender opinion of our weakness, who denied himself and toiled for us, who meekly endured us and waited long for our recognitions of his love; who walked before us in justice and mercy, and then, when, "as compassed himself with infirmity," he had offered prayers and supplications first for his own sins, and then for ours, went within the veil and disappeared, whither Jesus the forerunner had gone before. Soon as we gazed on the vacant place, the tracks of both thoughts began to run together. The subtleties of theology became instinct with a life, that found its response in our hearts. The earthly father gave form to the indefinable lines of the heavenly Father. The divine came out of the thick darkness. The eye that filled with tears over the loss of the guardian and best friend of childhood, saw reflected through the tears—as by strange lenses, the identification of the two modes of life. We looked along the pathway by which he had gone, and the instinct of a better faith told us that God is in us to will and to do. Christ is with us men of trembling heart, even to the end of the world. Death, which severer theologies are always investing with horror, comes to be a truth of life. We lose the horror in the hopes of those who have left our side. There is a holier presence in the vacant spot, which tells of the father of our flesh,



who corrected us and we gave him reverence. We learn quicker how the Great Father of us all is content to be seen in the angle, which the earthly form once made. We learn the living Christ by the light which His Spirit gave to the example of a progenitor. We can grasp some thoughts of *how* God was in Christ, forgiving sin and uncleanness and bearing with our infirmities.

There is a crying need of the re-assertion of this simple faith. It is *the* need of the age. First, the divinities of celibates who did nobly their hard works with the grossness of dark ages of robbery and tyranny, of sensuality and scorn of all finer feeling; and next the vagaries of mere preachers, who have built into their stupendous sect-theories, as much of 'hay, straw and stubble,' as of gems and gold, and have made men scientifically religious as they make them despisers of common thoughts, have left us yearning for a simpler faith in the powers of a *present, a living Christ*. Men turn away from the churches, and will turn from the noise of their jangling more and more. The churches in their present state of confusion and competition may raise their call to them in vain. Individual thinkers, both those who accept their trammels and those who reject them, receive little help and less conviction from their call. The softer glow of a half-rational emotionalism, born partly of animal excitements and partly of an intellectual heat which conceals the thinness of its own enthusiasm, attracts the weaker classes. The strong feel less and

less the need of Church help, and lapse more and more into careless ease and forgetfulness. The nation looks in vain to this ecclesiasticism for aid. Nothing demonstrates it more than the confusion which marks our treatment of the two races of *minor children*, which providence has committed to our care. We are the most cruel of stepfathers to them. God save us as a people from the measure which we have meted to them. Every great effort at reform in the "sins which are a disgrace to any people," exhibits the same powerlessness of Church motive, to arrest the evils and to heal the diseases of the commonwealth. How are we to escape the vortex, which is drawing us all down to a world of mere Babelism? Shall it be by unity in Church-life? Well! It would comfort many to think it. But while the evils are gathering and the sounds of storm and earthquake are growing quicker and louder, while red men are warring and dying out on the frontier, and black men are sinking away from our reach or looking to heathen Africa as a refuge from the wrongs of our Christian sympathy; while strikes, which have struck as yet only once, are only gathering for oft-given blows; while defaulters are hiding the characters of treachery and deceit under the sanctimonies of Church-profession, and with increasing impunity, so far as the churches are concerned, the order of our time is increasing *disunity*. Every ecclesiastical bond on earth is weaker to-day than it was twenty years ago. The very *plea* for

unity is given on that lowest of all religious motives—the wish to avoid evils. When the spirit of Christ reigns supreme in one or many men, *unity* is the yearning of all the higher souls. It takes form as the Celestial Bride, who needs only to wave her hand, and all do her lowest reverence. She sheds a breath of celestial perfume “out of the ivory palaces,” and all are too glad to follow her beck.

How shall we reach the mind of Christ? By following Him—by doing as He did—thinking as He thought—and praying and loving as He has taught us—and doing it, as He did in the homes of men. Now, it may be a strange thought to some, but it is very true to my mind, that *the ecclesiastical forms of piety are not the prominent features in the life of Christ. The home forms are.* His work as a Reformer, re-forming the thought and culture of the world, kept him mostly silent on all positive questions of ecclesiasticism. He spake with severe self-restraint on all such matters. He is seen in the temple—but not of it. He sits in the synagogue occasionally, but says no word there, which might not have been said on the lone mountain-tops of the Caucasus. But by the well at the way-side, by the city-gate, under palm-trees and sycamores, at the tables, in the sick-chambers, at the graves of individuals, He speaks as never man spake. In His teachings, confessedly only the esoteric principles, which could afterwards take form in Church-government, were enunciated. In common sympathies and needs, in lowly joys and

sorrows, in questions of troubled consciences or vexed minds, He spake openly, and as never man spake since. When a man sets himself to reproduce in himself the real Christ—he goes to the historic page to lift the picture out of its antique setting and make it live before him now. He goes around all the later imitations of it, all the false copies of His life, whether by the artist or the dreamer, the priest or the preacher, to talk with Christ Himself. He finds then, to reward his search, the Home-Christ, rather than the ecclesiastical. Christ, the High Priest of our profession took on no hue of either Jewish priest or medieval sacerdotalism. He is equally free from the *prophesyings* of the ascetics of the old or of the modern preacher. The one who would seek Him as He ever liveth to teach, as well as to make intercession, is to make the inner light of the great Teacher his own. His rule is a simple one, to think as Christ did—do as He did—to love and pray after His model. For example, while the same evils raged in Judea then which trouble us now, He had one theory of reform to which He always kept, and exemplified daily—to *be pure*. Every disciple gained to this faith was the ‘seed of wheat,’ gained for a harvest ‘of the womb of the morning.’ He went to the synagogue, but it was oftenest there that the record showed Him as denouncing the evils of proud traditions. His deeds of might and His words of love come to us from the commonest walks of life, adorned with very meagre shreds of traditional grace, and



owing but the smallest debt to the theories of the scribes.

It is so now, with the living powers of the idea of Him as dwelling in us. The one duty with us, is to be "with Him to the end," to be in any sense capable and worthy of having a claim to His promise to be with us.

Now the living powers which are in Christ, if we look at Him, either on the page of the Gospels or the Epistles, are those which least of all depend upon voluntary relations. No unprejudiced reader of either set of books, is conscious of a prompting, all the while, to seek some new condition of external works in which he may imitate and appreciate the blessings of this Son of Man. Christ always speaks to man, as man—not as a citizen mainly, or, as He only knew citizens in the commonwealth of Israel—not as members of a national Church. The apostles are faithful to this same thought.

In the Sermon on the Mount, which has the important emphasis, that Jesus declared it a compend of the Gospel, on the sayings of which, the wise were always to build an indestructible house of life—the unwise a perishing one, He has no word of a voluntary and limited model by which these life-houses were to be constructed. His idea of the beatitudes was of blessings for the meek, the pure in heart, the patient and self-denying. His reconsiderations of the ancient laws of the Mosaic system were intended to give a deeper meaning to the fear of God and the prompt-

ings of humanity, in any and all human relations. The Woes which fell from His sacred lips were directed against the Church-rulers, the Scribes, who had made the truth of none effect by their traditions, who had forgotten 'judgment, mercy and truth,' in their zeal for the ritual propitiations of mint, anise, and cummin, and for the Pharisees who had compassed sea and land to make proselytes to a system of whited sepulchres and inward failures. He aimed not to make churchmen, but men. Note, that if the Church had remained of Jewish forms, as for a while it seemed destined to remain, the Sermon on the Mount would have been altogether in harmony with it. Or note that the same Sermon might be as eloquent and as applicable now, if there were no outward and authoritative form to the Church. It would be as direct now, if it spake only to every man in the relations which are created by nature, as it is in the Churches which offer to claim the blessings of it as exclusively their own to minister and interpret.

We are not denying either the existence or the proper authority of the Church of Christ to do the works for the good of mankind, which are wisely limited and defined in the XXth Article of Religion. It has power to decree Rites and Ceremonies. It has power to abolish those rites which once held good and then wore out and lost effect in the advance of civilization. It has power to establish and regulate newer rites, as the wants of men demand new ones.

It has authority in matters of faith—a limited authority—and only a limited one. It is not lawful for it to ordain anything contrary to God's Word written, nor to expound one place of Scripture so as to make it repugnant to another. It cannot decree anything against that Word, nor enforce anything besides the same to be believed for necessity of salvation. It has no power to interject itself into the place between God and the soul, as a *sine qua non* of final salvation. The salvation in which it avails is here and now, in interpreting the great truths of God, and by its rites, convincing the reason of the sinner, of God as now living in Christ to speak pardon and peace. It has power to train living saints in the rhythm of a purer life in their homes, and in the homes of others. Within these limited bounds it has power, and ought to receive a reverent respect from all.

Practically all this might be accepted as a general rule, and yet nullified by the false aspects which could be urged upon the hearers of the Gospel. The profession of religion may be made to hinge on conditions, which make some things necessary to salvation, not as subordinate means, but as the final and all-comprehensive means, 'the be-all and the end-all,' of the Church's life. Here let me give the clear witness of another mind: "All the circumstances of this world are winter leaves, nourishing and protecting the bud of immortality, and destined, when that bud is unfolded in the eternal spring, to fall off and

perish. So too the means of grace are the scaffolding by the aid of which the spiritual life is built up, and will be removed as a deformity when the building is completed. Forms of Church government, human ordinances, and those intellectual labors which are employed in their establishment and defence, are adapted only to a state of imperfection, to the condition of individuals preparing for a higher existence; and so far from being ultimate objects, are only instruments and agencies, to be discarded when their purposes are accomplished."\*

The sacraments are often made necessary—not so much to the harmonies of a manhood which should result in '*Christ in us, the hope of glory*'—as directly and fatally necessary to salvation. A belief in certain forms of faith, which are looked on as divinely communicated, superhuman additions to the soul—is exalted into the object of the Incarnation and Atonement. Church-profession insensibly takes the place of real *character*. The common mind fastens on rites and ceremonies, or on creeds and dogmas, as the acceptable offerings to the Almighty. Religion is contracted to a narrow and formal routine of special duties. It flows in a low and shallow current, while the great issues of life, the natural duties of men and women, are left outside of it. Powers are attributed to the Bible, in matters which the Bible takes no note of and leaves undecided. The cry of the pulpit be-

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\* Rev. Hugh McMillan, *The Ministry of Nature*, p. 236.



comes the alarum of enthusiasts, who miss the idea of Christ, in the heat of their sectarian fanaticism. The great thought of Scripture, to repent and believe, that we may see Christ *now and be present with Him always*, that one may carry Him to his home, and learn of Him how to be a true son, a faithful father, brother, friend or citizen, is lost out of sight. It is as a charmed amulet, which has on it mystic characters, which shall be the *pass* to the gates of the Holy City, and shall testify to a formal election, irrespective of *character*—that we hear the Gospel offered.

Now the relations which God has created, He provides for. It is in them *mostly* that Christ is found. Read through the Gospels, and the idea flashes out of every page, that one finds Christ in these homes of men. Any one who will resolutely go behind all later interpretations of the New Testament to the living page itself, will *feel*—and in this, *feeling* is better than words—that he can always find Christ as *a man*, and learn of Him, what are the duties of a holy manhood. It is our duty, in the warrings of the ecclesiastical divisions of the day, each of which is saying to us: “Join me or some sect like me, or you are lost,” to seek eagerly for that faith, which is most purely a faith of Christ. It is a duty to study the Gospels, to find Him, as He was, that we may now feel Him with us, as He is always—the Son of Man.

This duty is the creed of the Church of the Household. It is with its saints as true now as it

ever was, that Jesus comes to their chambers, when the life is most intensified with thought and feeling, when we are looking on the cold, pale faces of the lost, and mourning of mysteries untold, that He takes us back to the language of familiar life, and speaks to our faith, 'Talitha-cumi.' They whose 'places know them no more,' are thenceforth yet better known by those who loved them most. The bond, which has been sprinkled with the drops of lethal water, takes the nature of both worlds, and endures.

Since the earliest ages of the world, there is always knowledge enough for our purpose, of that profound consciousness of this creed, which is sealed by the fact of death in our families. The first touching phrase of the departed was that they were '*gathered to their fathers.*' Abraham is represented as paying a lordly price, 'four hundred shekels of silver, current money of the merchant,' to Ephron, for the field and cave, where he might, as it were, drop anchor, after his wanderings, and consecrate one sacred spot, which might link the city which he never found on the earth, with 'the city which hath foundations.' He piteously tells the children of Heth—in full audience—"I am a stranger and a sojourner with you." He was seeking of them a rest for his heart. This was to be from that period his home.

The like pathos meets us in the story of Israel. In distant Egypt his heart turns longingly back to that rocky cave, which in all his eventful life, had been cherished with devout love. "Bury me not, I

pray thee, in Egypt." And he said, "Swear unto me—and he sware unto him."\* And again, he charged them, "Bury me with my fathers. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah."† The same yearning is felt still. Sacred spots rise up in all memories, when the problems of the future seek to solve themselves in the calm light of home affections. The heart untutored turns to them, as if there a softer light arose to interpret the will of the Ruler of men.

We link the past memories and affections of home to the hopes of another life. It is in this process, that the *living* power of truth takes root in the heart, and we find the growth of true religion to become the daily experience, rather than a question of speculative doctrine.

In these vacant places Christ stands as the Consoler. He was tried in all points like as we are. In all points, certainly, of sinless sorrow, we look to find Him always just before us. If we can practically separate, for the moment, from his perfect manhood, the common inferences of His divinity, which, true as they are, should never confuse the sensitive likeness of His experience and our own—we can find Him filling these vacant places. True, no man comes in at the door in visible form and gesture to reprove the loud lamentations of noisy grief and

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\* Gen. xlvii. 29, 31.

† Gen. xlix. 29, 31.

speak the word of miraculous recall to busy life; but He is none the less always to be found there. Over the cold form of the child who is taken, we may feel His shadow pass, and claim his consolation in our grief—"She is not dead—she only sleeps." Who of us ever thinks of his sleeping family as in any sense lost to him? And it is only a deeper sleep that separates the departed. The home is unbroken. Its numbers are complete. The Son of Man joins for us, by His precepts and promises, home and paradise. The *Talitha-cumi*, heard no more by the outward ear, is heard by faith. In the calm of the holy city, the redeemed awake to the light which needs no sun nor moon to create it. Over every silent grave in our cemeteries the ear of faith can hear the words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life—he that believeth in me, never dies."

It is then by these sainted ones in our households—the true priests who stand between us and the last things—who were all ours once, in the weakness of the flesh, and now, ours still, stand in sight of the golden altar and see the great High Priest as He offers up our prayers and tears, that we get into the secret of a sound piety. They are half ours, and half of diviner kinship. We climb by faith on the affections and sentiments which we shared in common for a while, and follow on to a reasonable, religious and holy hope. In the Church of the Household we find need for other forms of discipline—and follow the Son of Mary to find Him there the Way, the

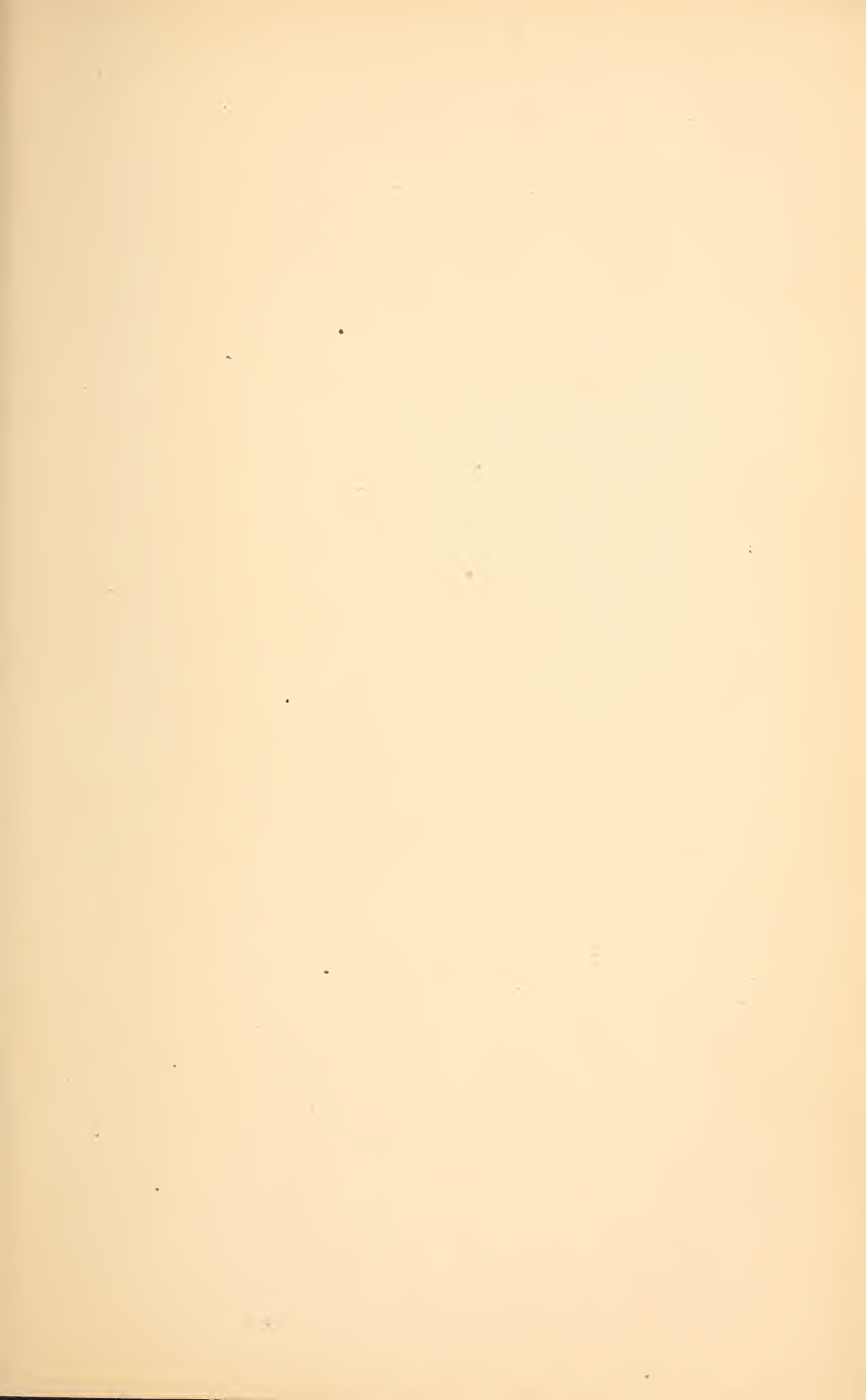


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Truth, and the Life. May God give us wisdom to purify, as husbands, mothers, or children, till these lesser rivulets of home-life may flow clear and pure, to unite in the Church Catholic here below—in the Church which at last needs no temple or rite, in the Holy City, of which Abraham once dreamed—of which all good men are dreaming still—the Church of the Redeemed, of which

The saints make up the fabric,  
And the Corner-Stone is CHRIST.













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